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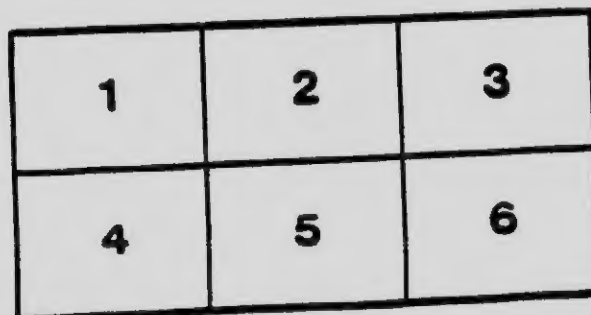
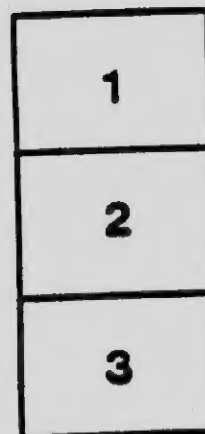
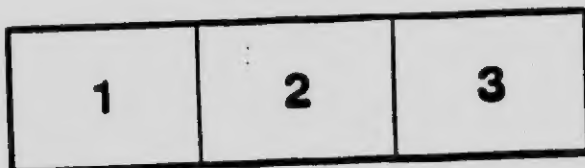
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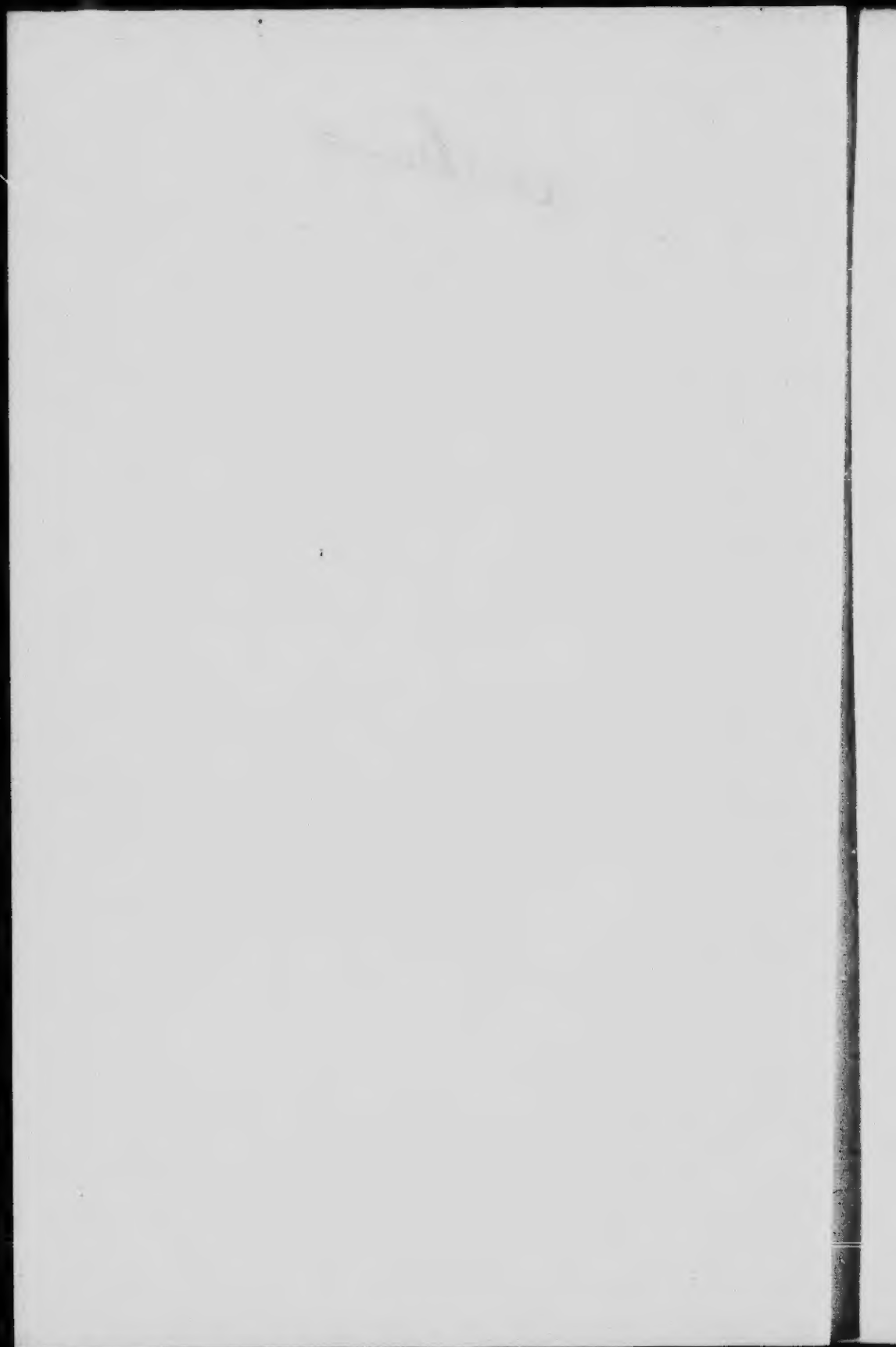
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*an Bird*

**BIBLICAL CRITICISM AND  
MODERN THOUGHT**

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**BIBLICAL CRITICISM**  
**AND**  
**MODERN THOUGHT**

**OR, THE PLACE OF THE OLD TESTAMENT  
DOCUMENTS IN THE LIFE OF TO-DAY**

**BY**

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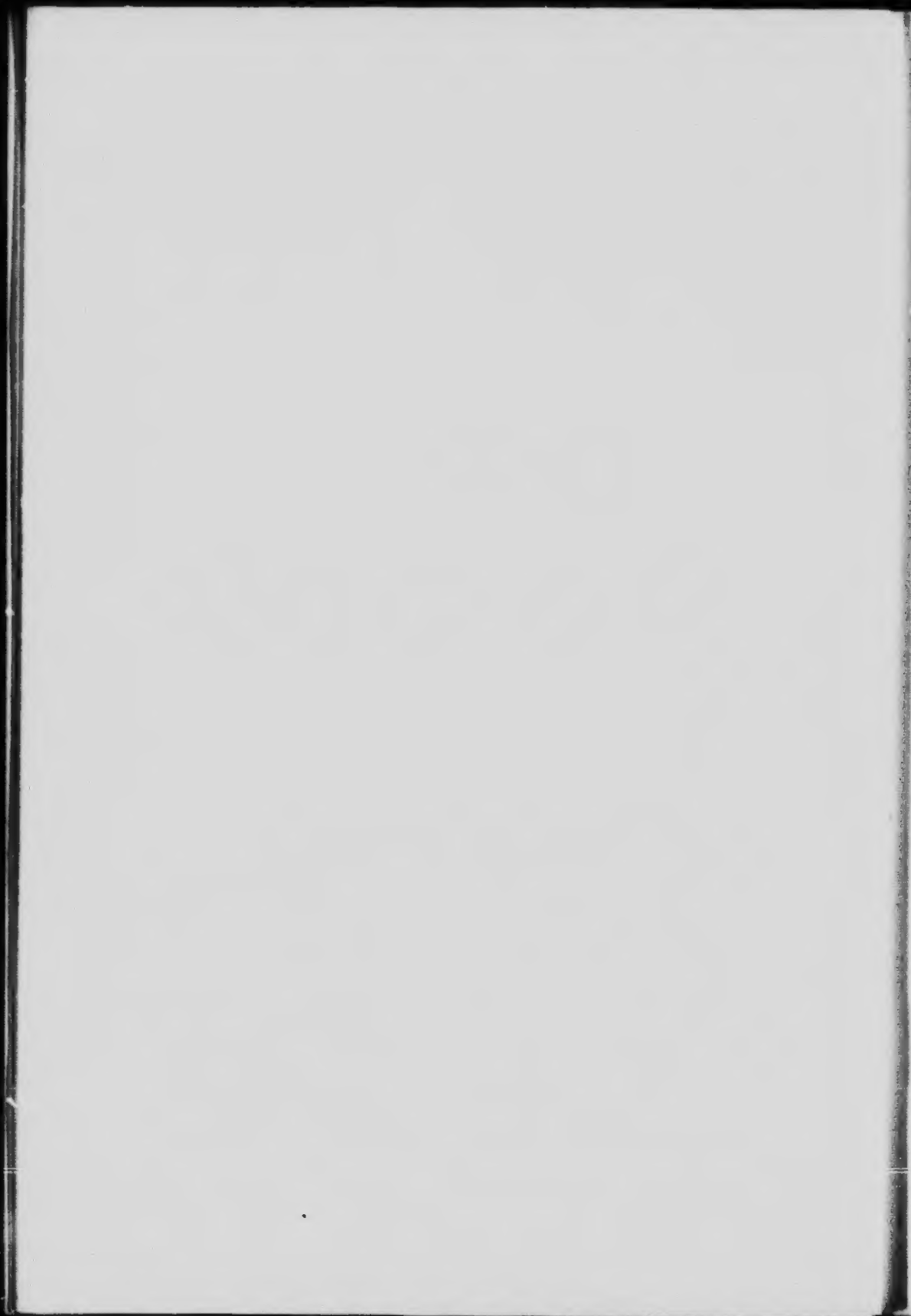
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TO  
SIR SANDFORD FLEMING  
K.C.M.G., LL.D.

WHO FOR TWENTY-NINE YEARS HAS RENDERED VALUABLE  
SERVICE AS CHANCELLOR OF QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY  
KINGSTON, CANADA, AND WHO, AMONG HIS MANY GIFTS  
TO THE CAUSE OF EDUCATION, FOUNDED "THE CHANCELLOR'S  
LECTURESHIP," THIS VOLUME IS, BY KIND PERMISSION  
RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED



## PREFACE

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THE author of the present volume was appointed to the Chancellor's Lectureship of Queen's University in 1906 and 1907, and delivered to the Theological Alumni Association the nine lectures which form the substance of the book. Chapter I., which now serves as an Introduction, appeared in 1901 as an article in *The Biblical World* (Chicago), and is reproduced by permission; Chapter XI. was read before The Philosophical Society of Queen's University in the autumn of 1906; the remaining three chapters, X., XIII., and XIV., were added to round out a little more the programme that the author had in mind.

So much as to the origin of the book, now as to its plan and purpose. The title, though perhaps somewhat too general, indicates the spirit in which the work was undertaken. Considering the audience to which, in the first place, the lectures were to be addressed, it was thought advisable to attempt a general review of the Old Testament Problem. It is true that these critical results have been for a

considerable time the property of scholars, but it may be doubted whether the great mass of the ministers and intelligent laymen, who must guide the counsels of the Church, have assimilated them and seen clearly their bearing upon the interpretation and exposition of sacred Scripture. The thought running all through the volume, so far as the author has been able to give expression to it, is that in order to understand or expound any passage of the Old Testament, and particularly the early narratives, it is necessary to form a clear idea of the place of this great book in the history and literature of the world. The endeavour to form such an idea brings us at once face to face with the fact that the increase in our knowledge of the earth and the life of humanity upon it compels us to modify some of our beliefs as to the nature of the Bible. Changes thus made at the demand of intellectual honesty turn out to be in the interests of the highest faith. Only by treating the book as real literature can we get at the heart of the people from whom it came, only thus can we grasp its real revelation. Professor Marti has well said that we are not compelled to renounce our belief in revelation because we cannot formulate a theory of it that is free from objection.

We are often warned by men who are themselves essentially modern in their way of thinking, that it is possible in the study of literature to make

too much of historical development and biological processes. We are quite ready to pay attention to this good counsel from any quarter, but all that it amounts to is that, whatever work we are doing, we must preserve our sense of proportion, and we must not prize the processes for themselves alone, but for the higher ends that they serve. The words of poets and prophets, simple or sublime, may mean more to us than to those who uttered or heard them, but it is through the original meaning that we pass to their larger applications. The artist cannot afford to despise technique and rely altogether upon vague impressions; the men with the greatest genius for presenting the ideal have submitted to the most severe discipline in the matter of form; and in our treatment of literature, while we beware of losing ourselves in minute controversies, we must be willing to submit to patient toil, which enables us by quick imagination and living sympathy to re-create the past,—the past out of which we came and to which we owe so much. By modern thought we mean not any wild speculations or temporary fads, but the great ever broadening current of human knowledge which comes to us from God through the toil of faithful men. Placed in the light of such knowledge, the literature of Israel grows large and influential; to make our knowledge of its spirit and meaning a little more adequate is the duty not only of ministers, but of all men who believe

that through the ages there runs a great purpose of mercy and helpfulness. If the author has been able to contribute in the slightest degree to this end, he will ever cherish a deep sense of gratitude to the Great Father who has guided him through so many difficulties. His thanks are due to the publishers for their courtesy, to Rev. H. T. Wallace, B.D., Fellow and Tutor in Hebrew, Queen's University, who read the original copy and verified the references, and to the Rev. Arthur Jenkinson, Innellan, Scotland, who gave his kind assistance when the volume was passing through the press.

W. G. JORDAN.

KINGSTON, CANADA,  
12th September 1908.



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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PRESENT OUTLOOK FOR OLD TESTAMENT INTERPRETATION.

ONE who studies the Old Testament sympathetically according to modern methods can say, sincerely and cordially, that the outlook for a more rational interpretation of that great literature is exceedingly hopeful. When, however, we seek to give a reasoned justification of this statement, we find that our embarrassment springs, not from the poverty of our material, but rather from the richness of our resources. As we shall see, the Biblical criticism which has come to increased efficiency during the nineteenth century and which many have feared as a destructive force, has multiplied our material largely, and has given to things that seemed to be small a great and abiding significance. In one short essay we can simply touch the fringe of this great subject, but we can at least attempt to handle it in such a way as to show the spirit of the critical movement and the direction along which it has run its course.

## I.

The nineteenth century has not been, as many imagine, limited to the "present and practical," and, indeed, real science does not acknowledge these misleading labels and arbitrary divisions; hence large areas have been added to this, as well as to other spheres of knowledge and realms of research. There are people, with considerable pretensions to culture, who think that it is a stupid, short-sighted policy to spend so much of one's time over languages that are called "dead" and over literatures that arose in the distant past. From that point of view it may seem somewhat perplexing that precisely in the last century, which we knew to be so living and modern, many able men have spent their strength and skill in bringing to light languages and literatures which were supposed to be, not only dead, but doomed to everlasting forgetfulness. But, as a matter of fact, the life of man has, during the last hundred years, been widened in many directions; if the century was an age of specialisms, it was not itself narrow or special, but rather marked by movements of universal range. We cannot now discuss the full significance of this fact, but, confining our attention to the particular subject in hand, we venture to say that languages which continue to live and exert a powerful influence in spite of our laziness and

prejudice, can hardly with correctness be counted among the dead things. Indeed, is anything dead in God's great world except the man who fails to respond to the inspiring influences which stream to us from so many quarters? Our divisions are superficial and our labels confusing. If it is a scientific business to dig up a fossil and show its place in the scale of being, it is surely a gain to science to unearth a language which enables men to write a new chapter in the history of humanity. Whatever, then, may be our own particular pursuit, we should be thankful that some are allured into special paths of investigation which have no attraction for us; and we should recognise that they as well as ourselves are helping to complete the grand scheme of things. The man of large culture would to-day hesitate to appropriate Lord Bacon's words, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province"; but even if we are called to work in a limited department, we can attempt to pursue our special work in a large, liberal spirit.

As to the Hebrew language, the character of Old Testament studies during the past century has been such as to render it more than ever necessary that those who would form a first-hand judgment upon the historical, literary, and theological problems which are now forced upon us, should have an accurate knowledge of the

original tongue. There is no need to regret this, or to apologise for it. The "Semitic revival" of the nineteenth century has been remarkable, and cannot be ignored; it has brought with it increased knowledge of the structure and spirit of the particular group of languages to which Hebrew belongs, so that the claim can now be made with all seriousness, that as a mental discipline and means of culture the study of these languages is not to be despised. The labours of great grammarians and lexicographers have made available, not only a wealth of material, but also such illuminating principles that a really scientific method is possible. We are not shut up to a dreary collection of details, but may take a comprehensive view of one of the great creations of the human mind. A really great language shows how a particular people looked out upon life and viewed the varied things with which men have to deal; to pass over into a different family of languages and appreciate the modes of thought of a people whose genius was so different from that of the West, requires an effort that must be beneficial to those who make it scientifically and sympathetically.

We might go back to the Greek school of early Christian interpreters, and find indications of striving after a scientific method; or we might point to slight and sporadic manifestations of the critical spirit before the Reformation; but in a

brief review it is both appropriate and advantageous to confine our statements to the century which has just reached its close. Speaking broadly, we may say that a great movement in Old Testament criticism has run its course within the nineteenth century, and that in recent years vigorous efforts have been made in applying and popularising the results thus gained. We must, then, dismiss in one short sentence what is worthy of an elaborate discussion, by saying that the Reformation gave the impulse, and the nineteenth century worked out the method. The result is that, while changes have been brought about, and new interpretations given which can be understood and appreciated by any man of average intelligence, a technical science has also been developed, which demands, like every other science, real, patient, and continuous study. The complicated processes of such a science are not fit subjects for pulpit exposition, but they precede the preacher's work, even as a valid science goes before every real art. The artist must know anatomy though he never paints a skeleton, but sets before us the fair, human form clothed in graceful drapery. The doctor must have studied anatomy, physiology, chemistry, and other sciences, but he does not visit the sick-room for the purpose of lecturing on the structure of the body or the functions of its organs. In like manner the work of the preacher will be

more effective if, behind his intelligent teaching and passionate appeals, there lies careful consecutive work upon the literature which, as a rule, forms the basis of his discourse. Further, many men who find their vocation in the Christian ministry have, in addition to the pastor's sympathy and the preacher's popular gifts, a real scientific interest; and, without undervaluing excursions into other realms of knowledge, we may rejoice that there is a prospect that this side of their mental life may find some measure of satisfaction in the sphere of theology and Biblical criticism.

The more one makes an effort to realise how much the nineteenth century has contributed to make possible a real understanding of this ancient people and its sacred literature, the more is this thought forced upon us that the greatest tribute to the power and significance of the Old Testament is the immense and varied work that has been lavished upon it. It would be a most hopeless thing to regard all this toil as the outcome of scepticism and vanity, a huge specimen of perverse ingenuity and misdirected effort. Contributions have been made by scholars in the leading nations of the world and from all shades of Christianity and Judaism; many men have worked from intelligible and valid principles of historical and literary study; they have checked or confirmed each other's results; and, as a whole, we may claim that they have been inspired by



love of the truth. This movement has not been exempt from the rule that no great thing comes to humanity or the Church without struggle and agony; not without pain have men cast off traditions that had been woven into their very life; not without sorrowful conflict have they sought to make sure that in setting aside outworn forms of thought no vital truth should be lost. When a man once gains even a glimpse of what this noble army of workers, not lacking in martyrs, has accomplished, he sees that by its very nature it must remain to the great crowd "an unconsidered miracle," but none the less it is to the special student a magnificent tribute to the unexhausted and inexhaustible spiritual influence of the Old Testament.

## II.

The nineteenth century has applied to the history and to the documents of the Hebrew people its own magic word, a word potent in so many departments—"evolution." The thought represented by that popular word has been found to have real meaning in our investigations regarding the religious life and theological beliefs of Israel. To admit that is one thing—and it is often admitted in a half-hearted, superficial way; to realise and assimilate it is a different thing, that, here as elsewhere, implies a living process.

Men are glad to find one keyword which seems to unlock the secrets of the world ; and there is no need to condemn too harshly such gladness, since it reflects, if even in a crude way, the desire to realise the unity of things and to express the inner principle which lies behind all life. We cordially confess that, when construed in a living, intelligent manner, the word "evolution" has been found full of helpful suggestions, and has embraced many elements of vital truth ; but we are not prepared to make a fetish of it, or to recognise it as an exhaustive and final word. Our Puritan forefathers had another word which to them was quite as important and equally dear—the word "election." That, too, was a great word, speaking of the supremacy of the Living God, who orders the world in wisdom and judges the nations in righteousness. They also were severely logical and pressed their favourite word, with inexorable consistency, and sacrificed, in theory at least, aspects of the truth which we are compelled to make prominent. Modern criticism places us in a position to realise how, in this particular case, the truths, expressed in words apparently so opposite, can be gathered up into a fuller conception of that divine life which manifests itself in the processes of human development ; as in the career of a comparatively insignificant people we find such true and growing revelation of the God in whom "we live and move and

have our being." Speaking from personal experience, the present writer can say that when the history and literature of Israel are construed in the most radical fashion that can be justified by a sound scientific procedure, the impression is deepened that the very process which brings out the *evolution* most clearly shows at the same time the reality of the *election*. If we admit that the Jews of later days, in handling the history of their past, carried into ancient times the forms of their own day, we must admit also that their treatment of this history was ideally true; and the most unsparing criticism justifies it to this extent that, unless we are sceptical in the strictest sense of the word and find no divine meaning at all in the world, we must confess that these people were called of God to a great religious vocation, and have filled with some degree of faithfulness a God-given mission. A learned divine once denounced the modern reconstruction of this history as involving a very terrible thing, namely, that which he styles, in a dangerously smart phrase, "the inspiration of repainting history." This Church dignitary was not a specialist in Old Testament studies; and had his philosophic insight been equal to his learning in other directions, he might have known that there is no painting which is not to some extent repainting; no artist paints a picture of the past without being deeply influenced by the

forms of his own time as well as by the peculiarities of his individual life. If that is true to-day, when we have succeeded so largely in developing the "historical sense," and when we make such strenuous, conscious efforts after a proper perspective, how much more true was it in ancient times, when men did not draw so clearly the distinction between fact and fiction, history and poetry! Then as to "inspiration," this quality pertains to the spirit and not to the mere outward form; and we may gratefully remember that, if it is really present, no criticism can destroy it, for criticism, which simply means intelligent study, is an attempt to find the eternal spirit embodied in these ancient forms.

### III.

This brings us to consider briefly the mediating nature of criticism. By this we do not mean what has been properly called mediating or apologetic criticism. There has, of course, been such a thing as consciously mediating criticism undertaken in the spirit of compromise, and seeking to select the best from conflicting views. There has also been, especially of late, popular apologetics in this department. This follows the path of least resistance, and seeks to rob biblical criticism of the terror that it awakens in timid souls, by presenting the results which are most attractive and which can be most easily assimilated.

We are not now discussing these more or less legitimate forms of activity, but maintaining that pure criticism, considered as a large impersonal movement prompted by the scientific interest, apart from the peculiarities of particular critics, has been a great mediating force. We must try, then, briefly to indicate the scope and meaning of this statement.

First as to the whole book, or collection of books. If we may be allowed to speak broadly of the opinions of men, and neglect the special case of those who were gifted with insight and were the pioneers of literary criticism, we may say that in the eighteenth century two irreconcilable views confront each other and engage in rude conflict. The rationalistic view regarded the Old Testament as consisting of worthless fables and legends, unreliable histories, and a few fine pieces of poetry or oratory. If the book had any value at all, it was because it did occasionally clothe in picturesque forms the commonplace conventional morality which was declared to be as old as creation. Over against this stood the strictly orthodox view of a sacred document, each word of which was inspired, and whose chief value was in the evidence for the supernatural to be drawn from detailed predictions of future events, especially in the circumstantial descriptions of the Messiah and His work given centuries before His appearance. The Old Testament was

the New Testament in type ; the external things were different, but the internal things the same ; or that which was implicit in the Old was explicit in the New. This was certainly superior to the rationalistic view, as the positive construction, even if imperfect, is better than mere negation ; and the orthodox dogma did at least recognise the organic connection between the Old and the New. Criticism, pursuing its steady course, has not completely justified either of these opposing views, but has enabled us to recognise, in a way not possible a hundred years ago, the truth that was in both of them. On the one side, it has proved that these ancient records are not histories, in the modern sense of that term, but that they contain valuable material for the construction of an important chapter in the life of the ancient world ; it has furnished a sympathetic appreciation of the limited yet varied literary forms through which prophets and poets appeal to us ; and as physical science turns to highest uses apparently worthless things, so biblical criticism has rescued for the student of religions as well as for the preacher, treasures which keen-minded men had consigned too hastily to the rubbish heap. On the other side, criticism has fully recognised the organic connection between Christianity and Judaism ; but it has not favoured the crude theory of verbal inspiration, and has treated with scant courtesy the mechanical view of types ; it has not

found the favourite phrase "implicit and explicit" able to do full justice to the situation. Instead of a book containing all Christian dogmas in mysterious forms, it gives us a study of real development, from a simple beginning, through the action and reaction of many living forces. It is a complex drama, in which, in what it falls short of as well as in what it achieves, the past stretches out pathetic pleading hands for the great gift of God that is still to be revealed.

The same mediating influence may be traced in exegesis, that is, in the explanation of particular passages or texts. There was a rude opposition between a vulgar literalism and an extravagant allegorical interpretation, and this could only be harmonised by a historical method which recognised the principle of development, and by a real literary interpretation which is able to do full justice to the passionate oratory of the prophets

and the varying moods of the poets. It is said to be one danger of the present method that it is so microscopic, that it subjects every word and phrase to such minute critical examination. This, of course, is a danger if the detailed research is not illuminated and guided by general principles which bring the smallest part into vital relation with the whole. The microscope is not a dangerous instrument, in biology or Biblical criticism, if it is used intelligently. Until this new method was wrought out, literalism and allegorism had to fight

a battle in which neither side could understand the other. The contrast and contradiction could only be solved by a principle that had not then been clearly grasped. There will always remain "the personal equation"; the matter-of-fact or the quick, poetic disposition will, here as elsewhere, continue to exert an influence. But, in general, we may say that the fanciful fashion of tearing biblical phrases from their context and making them say something of which the original writer never dreamed, is more unjustifiable than ever; because in most cases there is a fair chance of getting at the principle embodied in the history, prophecy, or song in such a way that we can apply it powerfully to our modern life. The allegorical method no doubt had its uses in enabling some of the great ancient thinkers to solve the exegetical problems of their own age, but in its best days it was liable in weak hands to run into the wildest extravagances; and it is disappointing to find the editor of a leading English religious journal defending the allegorical method and disclaiming "obscurantism" at the same time. The minister who is prepared to give some real study to his preparatory work is not now shut up to a false literalism or an absurd allegory. He may learn how the great religious thinkers of the Hebrew race looked out upon life, and fought its battle in such a spirit that their words inspire and strengthen us.



## IV.

It is not possible to sum up in a few words the results of such long and varied toil, but we may briefly mention two lines of special importance; first, the solution of the Pentateuch problem; and, secondly, the restoration of the prophet. In connection with the books which are associated with the name of Moses, there are, no doubt, still many questions remaining, and much room for the investigation of historical problems; but unless biblical criticism is a delusion, and the work of a century utterly in vain, the main lines of this subject have been correctly marked out, and the books which have caused so much trouble to earnest students have ceased to be merely a perplexing puzzle, and have become a rich treasury for the historian and student of religions, as well as for the preacher. The clever people who say smart things about "the mistakes of Moses," or declare that the Old Testament is "the millstone of Christianity," do not frighten us now; they are only playing on the surface of things, and have not grasped the real nature of the problem as it presents itself to reverent, serious students. When the different sections of these ancient books are studied in their proper order, they reveal to us the different stages of a living process, that process which must always be interesting and instructive, because it concerns the highest life,

namely, the growth of a great nation in the knowledge of God and righteousness.

Further, careful study has restored the prophet to his proper place, by showing that he was pre-eminently a preacher whose message was addressed to his own age, and that this has become a perennial message by the very power that made it so appropriate and searching at the time—the power of insight into moral principles, faithfulness to fact, and loyalty to God. If it is true that this view of the prophet was never completely lost, and that the Puritans of three or four hundred years ago, engaged in similar battles, appreciated it more by reason of practical sympathy than historical learning; it is also true that the teaching given to young people on this subject thirty or forty years ago left the impression that the prophet was mainly concerned with predicting the distant future, and that he was specially created to fill a prominent place in the system of apologetics. The great prophets stand before us now more noble and inspiring than ever before. We know how they are to be distinguished from false, time-serving, conventional prophets; how in their own day they bore the cross as they preached the righteousness of God and predicted doom for the wilfully wicked; how they constantly looked forward to that great day which by God's mercy often seems so near to the eye of faith, to that kingdom which is ever coming, but is never com-

pletely revealed or fully realised. We can understand, as we listen to their denunciations of shams and their plea for a purer humanitarianism or a nobler civic righteousness, how the modern scientist, discontented with orthodox dogmas, could find in these preachers of righteousness the highest forms of religious life; but, much as we reverence the prophets of Israel, we cannot think that they reached finality in religious teaching; their glory is rather that they prepared the way for a fuller revelation.

## V.

What then remains after all this shaking? What does biblical science hand over to the twentieth century?

1. A great literature which has grown rather than shrunk under the fires of criticism. Instead of books written by a few men, we have a great literature into which a numberless host of living souls have poured their noblest thoughts and purest aspirations. In the main, and for the great body of general readers, this book belongs to what is called the "literature of power"; that is, its chief service is in keeping alive great religious ideas, and inspiring men in their struggle, not only with evil, but also with prosaic fact and dead routine. Even from this point of view the book has become larger rather than smaller. The idea of revelation, somewhat mechanically

conceived, had pressed into the background the thought of a literature which mirrors the life of man and reflects the guidance of God. Recently the idea of literature has been emphasised, and, instead of looking on every page for the same few dogmas, we seek in the varied literary forms for manifestations of the life of men who are eager in the search for truth and God. These two ideas must be reconciled by the recognition that it is through the life of man thus reflected or embodied that the divine revelation comes to us. Without lessening the spiritual power, science has shown how to the special student it may also be a book of instruction, and contribute its share to the history of the past.

2. Hence there remains an important series of documents for those who wish to know how Christianity grew out of Judaism, and in what way the religion which we now love and seek to live has its roots in experiences so different and distant. How did there come forth from such an intensely national religion a faith that is purely spiritual and knows no distinction of clan or race? That must always be an interesting problem, and it has lost none of its importance. It is a startling change when out of the heart of narrow Judaism there springs a religion spiritual in its nature and universal in its range. This, we shall see, was not so sudden as it seems; not without long, slow, gradual preparation involving much discipline of

national life and individual experience. This leads us to take a scholarly interest in books not included in the Jewish Canon, and it shows us that there are no "silent centuries," but that we must take a larger view of this history, if we are to understand the glorious saying that God, who in sundry times and divers manners spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son.

3. A great book for the preacher still remains, with its historical pictures, varied biographies, and sacred poems. Certain parts of the book were lost to the preacher for a while; that is, to the preacher who possessed something of the scientific spirit and was troubled with an "exegetical conscience." The old view was lost, and the new one not fully appropriated; a transitional period always has its difficulties. But many have now worked themselves through into a position where they can do justice to the demands of science without being unfaithful to the practical needs of religion. From the point of view of concrete, picturesque, powerful preaching, it is most important that the Old Testament should not be neglected in the pulpit. In recent years, as the effect of influences coming from various directions, the social side of the religious life has been emphasised. With this, of course, a true individualism and a deeper view of the personal life must be combined; but the individualism

cannot be restored in precisely the old form ; the preacher must now insist upon the relationship of man to man ; religion must be a force inspiring social purity and civic righteousness. Here the prophets and teachers of Israel are near to us, though they seem so far away ; their message was in the main to society, and it is a message that we can adapt to our own day. This needs wisdom as well as courage, intelligence as well as fervour ; but it is a high task worthy of the true preacher who honours God and is sympathetic toward men. If we will base ourselves upon that which is best in the past, if we will use wisely the results of all this painful conscientious toil, then in the new century the Old Testament needs neither be a sealed book nor a neglected book, but may take, more and more, its rightful place as one of God's ministering servants, bringing light, joy, and peace to struggling souls.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE OLD TESTAMENT AS A PROBLEM.

THE Bible is a book which more and more moves our wonder and quickens our enthusiasm when we think of its character and career. During the centuries that have passed since the Hebrew histories and prophecies were placed by the side of the Christian gospels and epistles, the influence of the book has grown in volume and intensity. In seasons of darkness and confusion it has ministered in lonely places to devout truth-seeking souls; in days of light and activity its power of silent, helpful ministry has been enlarged, and, at the same time, it has become a centre around which the fiercest battles have been waged. Men of all classes and creeds combine to render homage to the Bible, to speak or write eloquent eulogies concerning the mystery of its origin, the divinity of its inspiring, uplifting power, and the wonder of its ever-increasing influence. The study of the different versions of the Bible is in itself a matter of absorbing interest, and around every new form that it assumes, new histories

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grow, and the ancient literature constantly claims a closer kinship with modern life. The message in prophecy, psalm, and gospel proves its power to touch the human heart whether it is enshrined in some world-wide language, or veiled in some humble local dialect. This we all acknowledge; and we are ever ready to confess that our personal life would be purer and stronger if we nourished our souls more constantly and consistently on its noble ideals, and that our national life would be cleaner if we kept before our minds the fact that righteousness alone is the power that gives real stability and strength to a nation.

On this theme lectures of living interest and far-reaching importance can be given; but at present it is our business to leave what is popularly called the "practical" side and turn our attention to other matters, which are also in their own way very practical; we have to face certain intellectual questions, such as the following: What is the place of the Hebrew literature in the life and history of the world? How is the interpretation of this literature affected by the increased stores of knowledge and by the enlarged outlook which science and philosophy have given to the modern world? How far does critical study of the book compel us to modify the traditional views as to the history of the Hebrew people and as to the growth of their literature? These and similar questions are forced upon us



by the needs of the situation, and we find stimulus and instruction in examining them, even if we cannot furnish complete and exhaustive answers. The amount of intellectual energy that has been spent on such questions by scholars of all nations and of various communions during the past three or four centuries is simply incalculable. The workers in this department have not only been numerous and energetic, they have, many of them, been equal in mental capacity and spiritual insight to the leaders in other realms of scientific research. The motive power that has impelled and sustained these men, whether in the quiet study or in the more adventurous explorations, has no doubt been a desire to increase our knowledge of the past life of humanity, and to gain a deeper insight into the origin and meaning of those documents which are so closely connected with the history of our religion.

There seems to be, however, in the minds of many a lurking suspicion that too much questioning with regard to sacred books and sacred things is dangerous. Certain ecclesiastical leaders and some popular preachers still feel that it is their duty to warn the people against the perils of "the Higher Criticism." In passing we may say that the real peril of our time seems rather to come from ignorance and stupidity, from that utter worldliness which makes mere money-getting and base pleasure-seeking the real ends of life.

When we read the lives of men who have devoted themselves to the pursuit of knowledge in the sphere of physical science or in the realm of literature and history, we are often humbled by their stern unworldliness and their unselfish loyalty to truth. Too often their labour has been received with foolish suspicion instead of intelligent appreciation.

Professor Sayce, whose great and varied learning does not seem to encourage the dignified self-restraint which guards against recklessness of statement, tells us that the main motive of criticism is to get rid of the miraculous. "'Criticism' professes not to deal with the abstract question of miracles. But it does so indirectly by undermining the credit of the narratives in which the miraculous is involved. In fact, the presence of a miracle is of itself accounted a sufficient reason for 'suspecting' the truth of a story, or at all events the credit of its witnesses. If there was no record of miracles in the Old and New Testaments, it may be questioned whether so much zeal would have been displayed in endeavouring to throw doubt on the authenticity of their contents. We find no such display of 'critical' energy in the case of the Mohammedan Koran" (Sayce, *Monument Facts*, etc., p. 125).

We are surely not using strong language when we say that this is a shallow, foolish statement, and one that can only make its appeal to those

who are quite ignorant as to the nature of criticism and the history of the critical movement. We have certainly been taught to look to Oxford for clearer insight and more courteous discussion than we find exemplified in this booklet with its absurd title and reckless denunciation.

The man who can claim a monopoly of "facts" and ascribe to his opponents the possession of mere "fancies" may be well equipped for popular controversy, but he certainly does not in this way impress one as being endowed with that fine discrimination and those catholic sympathies which fit a man to balance complex arguments. We shall be compelled to give consideration again to Professor Sayce in the course of these discussions; in the meantime, we may point out that it is preposterous for any one man to bring such a sweeping charge against a movement which has enlisted the sympathy and co-operation of Christian scholars in all lands and communions. In the book from which we have just quoted, "criticism" is treated as if it meant a mass of unreliable conjectures permeated throughout by the spirit of scepticism, while "archæology" stands for an honourable science which possesses a vast accumulation of trustworthy "facts." There is no need to challenge this now, as our whole discussion will be an indirect criticism of this assumption; and we shall utterly fail in our present purpose if we do not succeed in showing

that real criticism is never content with mere negative results, but is ever seeking for a positive interpretation of the material that it is called upon to examine.

Is it not wiser to see in the restless intellectual energy that expends itself on the interpretation of this literature a noble tribute to the greatness of the book, and, in fact, a much higher form of reverence than the clamorous orthodoxy which worships the shell and neglects the inner life? Science, in the large sense of that word, is a great impersonal movement that draws all realms of life within its range, and endeavours to write the story of God's dealing with the world and with men in all ages. Science does not value things as small and great according to our personal pride or sectarian prejudices; it places each thing in its proper position and right proportion. We are each apt to think that our own sphere is noblest and most important; and even that thought, partial as it is, serves to quicken our enthusiasm and sustain our diligence; but it is important that we should seek sometimes a larger outlook, and regard ourselves as being simply a small part of the infinite whole. We may then rest assured that the labour and skill which has dug up long-buried monuments, and successfully wrested their secrets from languages that were lost, is good for the present world, good for science, and in the broadest sense

for the spiritual life of men. And when we come to speak of the labours of centuries spent upon these few sacred pages, we do not care to strike a balance-sheet of loss and gain; any change that is demanded by loyalty to truth must in the end be real gain; if it comes through loss or apparent loss, this simply shows that the process of life is the same here as elsewhere; through the loss of the old we pass to the new and higher life.

From this point of view such a phrase as "The millstone of Christianity," regarded as descriptive of the Old Testament, is not only unbelieving, it is absurd. This implies that criticism must by its very nature be destructive. It suggests that we can strengthen Christianity by cutting it clear of its original sources. This solution may be radical, but it is too simple. It ignores the results of all the patient, reverent toil which, while freeing us from outworn traditions, has made the literature even more inspiring and fruitful than it was before.

On the other hand, we have little sympathy with those theologians who speak of a certain abstraction called "the modern mind" as if it were a spirit of evil, the cause of all our perplexities, and the perverse scorner of all good old modes of thought. However uncomfortable it may be—and we can ourselves testify to some

pain in the process—to feel that we are violently shaken, or gradually moved from old positions which we had come to regard as safe and final, when we discriminate carefully between the things that have fallen away and the things that cannot be shaken, we realise with regard to this great literature how true it is that “age cannot wither it, nor custom stale its infinite variety.”

The O'd Testament is not merely a book, though it forms part of the volume that men have come to call, in a supreme sense, “The Book.” It is not simply a library, or a collection of books. It is a literature in the sense that it represents a thousand years of varied, struggling life. When carefully studied, it tells the story of the origin of a remarkable nation and the growth of a great religion. It contains all the simpler literary forms, primitive poetry, picturesque popular stories, histories local and national, sermons of the most living practical kind, poems which grapple with deep problems and express the passionate aspiration of the awakened soul.

It is this aspect of these books that has been insisted upon during the past century, and many attempts have been made to exhibit it to the public in popular forms. And just here a question has arisen which to some of us seems now quite simple, but which has caused much painful discussion, namely, How can the book be at the same time a literature and a revelation?

Literature is something so very human, we may even say "earthly"; just in proportion to its reality is it "racy of the soil," does it reflect human passion of every kind; nothing human is alien to it; nothing is so small as to escape its vivifying, ennobling touch. How can you harmonise such rigid dogmatic ideas as "a canon" and "a revelation" with a thing so variable, subtle, and atmospheric as literature? That question opens up for many of us a real problem which each thoughtful man must solve for himself. The answer to be given here will be more appropriate and effective at the close of our discussion than at the beginning.

Here, by way of digression, it may be allowable to say, that to many thoughtful Christian men it is a painful thing to reflect upon the kind of harmonising and apologising that has been so common in this connection. It is quite true that men who are set to guard the treasures of ancient truths ought not to be easily bewitched by fascinating novelties. It is good that new explanations, be they ever so clear, should fight their way and win recognition on their own merits. It is better for men to hold on for a while to outworn theories, than that they should lose that which really sustains the soul in its struggle against error and wickedness. All this is true; but when we have said all, we have to confess that the representatives of the Church, as

a whole, have moved too slowly, the movement has been too much under external pressure, concessions have been made too late and in a grudging spirit. Historical criticism, which has been called God's gift to this generation, will, we believe, help us to place these matters on a reasonable and fairly permanent basis. Not that there can ever be unanimity on all points of the history, or uniformity in the interpretation of the literature. No sane man would ever expect or hope for that; but we do hope to look the whole range of facts so frankly and honestly in the face that there will be no need of questionable apologies and unworthy compromise.

There is another idea that meets us when we begin to investigate the Old Testament, namely, that of a sacred "canon." Here again we have the thoughts of fixedness, infallibility, and finality, which seem so hard to reconcile with the freedom and flexibility of a great literature. We need not now linger over definitions of the term, or endeavour to trace the growth of the idea. It is evident that the beginning of literature must be much earlier than the beginning of a canon or a collection of sacred books. It is part of the task of the Old Testament student to trace both these movements, and to appreciate their historical significance.

It was not until the Christian era that all the various parts of this collection were treated as



absolutely sacred, so that an attempt was made to reproduce with slavish exactness the features of one particular copy. Even here we must introduce a warning against the careless use of analogies from the life of other nations. We now know that there were professional scribes and careful copyists at work in Babylon even before Israel came into existence as a nation, but we cannot infer from this that the same classes existed and that the same methods were employed among the Hebrew people from the beginning of their history and through all the various stages of their life. This history may be roughly divided into different periods, each having its peculiar features of political circumstances and religious life. What the characteristic features of each period were must be learned mainly from the Hebrew records themselves. Illustrations from the life of other nations should be cordially welcomed, but we wish throughout this whole course to make clear the fact that the Hebrew people had a real history of their own with a strongly marked individuality, and that through the peculiar form in which this literature has come to us the world has received a revelation of God's character and of man's capability.

When we take up the Hebrew Bible and read the brief table of contents on the first page, we note a threefold division, The Law, The Prophets, and The Writings. The first

part contains the five books which have for centuries been associated with the name of Moses; the second consists of histories and prophetic writings; the third gathers together varied books of the so-called Wisdom literature, the poetry and proverbs of the Hebrew people, as well as some of the later histories. This division is ancient, and probably corresponds to three distinct stages in the growth of the Canon. These stages represent important points in the life of the Jewish people. After the return from the Babylonian Exile, in the fifth century B.C., the people formed a Church rather than a nation, and in that capacity they canonised the five books of Moses, as containing the law which ought to rule their national and personal life. Round this spiritual centre they rallied; and while those in Jerusalem kept alive their religion in its old home, thus preparing the way for the Christian faith, other representatives of the race in the great centres of the world exemplified the power of the Law and the influence of the prophets.

In the second century before the Christian era the Jewish religion had to struggle for its life: attempts were made to force the people into idolatry, and to destroy their sacred books. With division inside and persecution outside, it was indeed an hour of darkness, well symbolised by the lion's den and the fiery furnace. The

books of history and prophecy were not destroyed, but became even more precious, and formed a second stage in the growth of the sacred collection or Canon.

Two centuries later there was a great revival and a great schism: Judaism stood face to face with a new religious movement, the full significance of which men could not then fully understand. Out of the bosom of this most intensely national religion there went forth a universal world-conquering faith, and in this great hour of conflict between mother and child the Palestinian Jews completed the list of their sacred books and fell back proudly upon their great past.

Thus we may say of the contents of the Hebrew Bible, first, that this Canon was Palestinian. From Alexandria in Egypt there has come to us a more extended list or larger Canon, containing many of the so-called Apocryphal Books. Second, that it is Protestant; that is, the books printed in our ordinary English Bible correspond in number though not in order to those contained in the Hebrew Bible, and to the Reformers these alone were authoritative. Protestant theologians have, in the past, confined themselves to this "Canon" in their search for the genuine element of Old Testament teaching. Further, we may speak of it as the Hebrew Canon, since all its books

were written in the Hebrew language, and we still possess copies of the originals; while all the other books of the larger list come to us in the Greek language. These facts are in themselves intensely interesting, and they remind us of one of the most important points in the intellectual history of humanity, the first meeting, the conflict and combination of Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy. It is well for us to remember that these stages in the growth of the Canon, which to us are historical facts for cool correct classification, were once living movements full of the fire of religious passion and national enthusiasm.

Problems arising out of this subject need to be clearly noted, because they have played an important part in the history of criticism and call for the attention of the theologian. (1) Is the old distinction of "canonical" and "non-canonical" valid, or valid in the same sense as before? The leaders of the Protestant reformation could make a perfectly clear distinction between the books (the Hebrew Canon) which ought to be used in proving the doctrines of the Christian faith and those (the Apocryphal Books) which were suitable only for private reading. But the historical method has shown that the plan of proving doctrines by texts chosen at random from any part of the Bible is not the best way of studying a great literature or of grasping

a great revelation. When we are tracing the history of human thought and of God's revelation through that thought, we must examine carefully and reverently all the records of Hebrew life until Christianity fulfils its noblest ideals and carries forward its highest aims. As to spiritual quality, we may sometimes find it hard to draw any real distinction between say 1 Chronicles and 1 Maccabees, or between Proverbs and the Wisdom of Jesus the Son of Sirach. While the distinction drawn by the word "Canon" has served a practical purpose and will always have an historical meaning, we must confess that it has lost something of its absoluteness and rigidity.

(2) This Canon, however, was not regarded by the Jew as being all on the same dead level of mechanical inspiration. "The Canon" for the Jew, in the strictest sense, was the Law, the Torah; he cherished reverence, no doubt, for other parts of the ancient Scriptures, but he placed the Law on a pedestal of its own, and strained the powers of language to express his sense of its absolute, eternal perfection. The Samaritans possessed only this part, and the Sadducees of our Lord's day do not appear to have acknowledged the binding power of other parts. Among certain classes of Jews, then, a distinction seems to have been drawn between different parts of the Old Testament

writings similar to that which was made in later times between the Canonical and Apocryphal writings. The "dead level" idea, against which criticism, in its beginnings has always had to contend, does not, then, go back to the most ancient times; it is the product of an age that was neither creative nor critical.

In studying the history of criticism, we find that one of the first things to be done was to clear away this idea of a "dead level," and disprove the dogma of verbal inspiration; which, in its attempts to glorify the book as revelation, destroyed it as literature. Of course there were always bold sceptics to laugh such a doctrine to scorn, and philosophers to prove that it was irrational; but we are not now dealing with those classes; we refer rather to reverent Bible students who patiently showed that the Book, when allowed to tell its own tale, did not support any such theological abstraction. Professor Sayce grudgingly admits that this is one of the services rendered by criticism. He says, "The doctrine of verbal inerrancy is Hindu and not Christian; and if we admit it, we must, with the Hindu, follow it out to its logical conclusion, that the inerrant words cannot be translated into another tongue or even committed to writing" (*Monument Facts*, p. 124). The influence of a dogma is not destroyed when it is disproved; it may be true of men that when their brains are out

they are dead, but dogmas continue to flit about a long time without any brains. This particular ghost will still be found flitting over the pages of commentaries, and giving a mystic, antique air to modern sermons. Theologians are busy re-stating the doctrine of inspiration, and they rejoice that the rigid theories referred to never received the sanction of any really great creed or council. However that may be, this theory was for a long time very powerful; and its dominion was broken not by abstract reasoning, but by the specific criticism which has in recent years given new life to biblical study.

We conclude this introductory statement with the question, What then is "The problem of the Old Testament"? A well-known theologian has recently published, under this title, an elaborate attack on the whole critical movement, which begins by telling us that the problem is twofold, first religious, then literary. When we first read the title of this section, we thought that it required considerable explanation, but we cannot feel that the explanation forthcoming is convincing. The word "religious" here does not seem to be quite appropriate; its place would be better taken by "theological" or "philosophical." It is, of course, a question concerning the nature of a particular religion, and in that sense a religious question; but this is scarcely the specific use of the term that one

would expect in a learned treatise. What Dr. Orr means precisely may be stated in his own words. He says that we must answer first the question: "How are we to conceive of the *religion* which the Old Testament embodies, and presents to us in its successive stages, as respects its nature and origin?" (*Problem of the O.T.*, p. 4). That is, we have to decide certain momentous theological questions; in other words, we must take sides, choosing the ancient orthodox correct view, rejecting the modern, critical, and sceptical way, then we can go on to the next question, "How are we to conceive of the *literature* itself, or of the books which make up the Old Testament, as respects their age, origin, mode of composition, trustworthiness, and, generally, their connection with the religion of which they are the monuments?" This is surely a strange contention. If you can settle the so-called "religious question" first, there does not seem to be any need to go on to the second question at all. And Dr. Orr admits that, at first sight, there may appear to be no connection between the two; when the fact is that he has stated them as two separate, independent questions.

Dr. Orr's contention, that the great results of literary criticism come from a certain theory as to the nature and origin of Hebrew religion rather than from a patient investigation of all the facts,



cannot be dealt with now, but strong objection must be taken to his form of stating the problem. A somewhat different statement is here given, in the fewest words possible; such proof and illustration as we can furnish must be gleaned from the trend of the whole discussion.<sup>1</sup>

As a religious book the Bible is many-sided; it makes its powerful appeal to all classes. When we are using it for the sake of the inspiration and spiritual nourishment it gives, we exercise an unconscious criticism or selection, we turn instinctively to the songs or sermons that meet our needs, we are not then concerned with questions of Biblical science. When we come to speak of a "problem," we mean something more than this; the word belongs to another region, it makes us think of mathematics or philosophy.

As applied to the Old Testament, it raises the question, How is our treatment of the book, as an intellectual problem, affected by the new knowledge and changed condition of our time? For example, when enlightened men could still believe that the world was created six thousand years ago, that Hebrew was a primitive language, and that the Hebrew people were an ancient people, then they could hold the traditional view of the book in whole and in detail. Not only could they meditate profitably on Psalm and Prophecy, but

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter XI.

the intellectual framework in which these were held remained undisturbed. But now such a flood of light has been thrown upon these and similar questions that some re-adjustment is necessary. The problem of the Old Testament relates to the measure and character of this re-adjustment, or, in other words, it is an investigation of questions relating to the place of this particular literature in the life of the world and the process by which it attained to such wonderful power. Thus we must consider the relation of this literature to its antecedents and its surroundings, as well as the structure of the whole and the inter-relation of the parts. These are literary and historical questions, and they must be faced *first*, and out of them or in connection with them arise certain theological or philosophical questions. A man who has an intelligent faith in the living God cannot for a moment think that there is any danger to religion in a vigorous handling of such questions. Indeed, we are convinced that the reverent study of such subjects is one of the means by which our theology will be enlarged and our spiritual life quickened. Criticism is always seeking to find and interpret life. To settle the date of a particular document is only a means to an end; the end of this and similar operations is to reconstruct a picture of the past and learn how saints and poets of those distant days looked

out upon the world and up to the living God. Such sympathetic communion with noble souls of the past will enable us to see more clearly and grasp more firmly the eternal principles. But in so far as the Old Testament is an intellectual problem, the literary and historical questions come first, that is, you must place your picture as close as possible to its proper age, if its features, some of which are now dim and antique, are to yield their full meaning. Just in so far as you can correctly arrange your series of pictures you can reconstruct the history and interpret theology. Then you can draw rich results to quicken theology and inspire the religious life of your own time. This work should be interesting to all who believe that religion is something deeper than formal creeds or Church machinery. This study is essential to the preacher whose duty it is to interpret these ancient stories and make them the means of present instruction and helpfulness. Our task in these few chapters will be to show not only how the whole horizon has been widened and the Book set in a larger framework and a more majestic background, but also how, instead of shrinking under this process, the literature has grown greater and richer in response to the strenuous sympathetic toil that has been bestowed upon it.

## CHAPTER III.

### ARCHÆOLOGY AND CRITICISM.

As we have pointed out, some work of re-construction and re-interpretation was rendered necessary, not because scholars took a malicious delight in creating unnecessary difficulties, but because the world had moved on, and the interpretation of ancient literature could not possibly remain stagnant. In connection with a subject of this kind it is impossible to have perfect agreement as to all the details; even if it was a matter of pure science we could not hope for that, much less in a sphere where theological prejudices and religious interests are so largely involved. As a matter of fact, there are many important points upon which the great majority of Old Testament scholars have reached substantial agreement; nearly all the recent text-books, dictionaries, and commentaries are written from this new point of view. Any one who, for the first time, compares the results given in such books with the view formerly held, may think that the change has been sudden and revolutionary, but, as a matter of fact, it has been

exceedingly slow ; we are now reaping the rich results of the labours patiently bestowed by scholars of many generations. We believe in the guidance of God in this sphere also, not guaranteeing perfect accuracy in details, but giving to the world broader and nobler thoughts when these were needed to unify knowledge and quicken life. Changes in the intellectual standpoint, especially when they are so radical and far-reaching, involve fierce controversies in the community and powerful searching of heart by the individual ; but surely there is something significant when, after generations and even centuries of discussion, we look back upon a definite movement which has kept on steadily in the same direction, becoming even clearer and more convincing. (See Chapter X.) We do not wish to overawe dissentients by the appeal to time and numbers ; indeed, we are constantly reminding students that they need to beware of a new dogmatism, and to remember the claim of criticism that it counts only such arguments as can be appreciated and appropriated by all who are prepared to give the time and strength which are needed in order to gain familiarity with the evidence. Sometimes, however, it is claimed that there is another court of appeal ; the man who wishes to cling to old traditions in spite of the weight of expert evidence is told that he can appeal to archæology and find in it a rock of

refuge against which the proud waves of criticism beat in vain. People in perplexity and distress have been comforted by the assurance that, "Whenever archæology has been able to test the negative conclusions of criticism, they have dissolved like a bubble into the air" (Sayce, *Monument Facts*, etc., p. 25). As for Assyriology, "it has for ever shattered the 'critical' theory which would put the Prophets before the Law, it has thrown light on the form and character of the Mosaic code, and it has indirectly vindicated the historical character of the narratives of Genesis" (p. 87). This is an interesting situation; but it is perplexing to the non-specialist student to be told that two great fields of inquiry yield, on important questions, conflicting and contradictory results. By what method can we best proceed to test this statement, so far as to form an idea of the real state of the case? It is evident that we cannot settle a question of this kind by any counting of heads. Not only is that method too mechanical when votes must be weighed as well as counted, but it is impossible for any one person to decide who would be entitled to vote, and to settle the precise value to be attached to each opinion. We would have also to discuss the question concerning different classes of witnesses. Professor Sayce tells us that "there are students of Egyptian and Assyrian who have devoted themselves only to the philological side of their

subject; and where archæology is involved the opinion of such students is just as valueless as that of any other philologist in other fields of research" (p. 14). Unfortunately this learned critic does not tell us, in this place, exactly what he means by archæology, and what is included in a science which is supposed to endow its students with such wonderful powers. Professor Hommel, also referring to Delitzsch, while not questioning his standing as the founder of an exact philological treatment of the Assyrio-Babylonian language, suggests that his knowledge is rather of the language than of the actual history and life of those ancient times. We can imagine, however, that the great Assyriologist would warmly resent this attempt to weaken his authority as an expounder of Babylonian life and thought. This is not now a vital point for us save to remind us that the word "archæology," as used in this controversy, is a very vague term; that scholars in this department, as elsewhere, have differences among themselves; and that the perfect archæologist who can settle historical questions by the purity of his archæology is another of Dr. Sayce's abstractions. Assyriologists such as Zimmern and Delitzsch accept the critical conclusions arrived at by the great body of Old Testament scholars; Professor Hommel follows the methods and accepts many of the conclusions of the critical school, while losing no opportunity to denounce

Wellhausen's "philosophy of history"; and while Professor Sayce spends much rhetoric in denouncing the "Higher Criticism," his deviations from the traditional views are so many and various that it is difficult to say exactly where he is at any particular time. If we were to enlarge this list, and give names of representative workers in different parts of the world, it would simply show that among archæologists or Assyriologists there is no consensus of opinion against the results obtained by those whose special sphere of work had been in the Old Testament. This is, of course, what might be expected, because the real leaders in the study of this literature, from Gesenius early in the previous century to Driver of our own day, have not only been strong in their study of the Semitic languages, but have kept a keen outlook towards the results of discovery in other regions. While linguistic studies necessarily played a great part in the preparation for their work, they have not been mere philologists; words to them, like other things, have been a means to an end, that end being the attempt modestly and courageously to restore the picture of real life in those ancient days. Among recent workers, think of such names as those of Dillmann and Wellhausen, Robertson Smith and A. B. Davidson, as illustrating this statement. On the other hand, philology, often highly speculative in character,



plays a great part in the works of archæologists of all classes, and it has to bear very heavy burdens in historical and theological controversies. For this and other reasons archæology would form a very poor court of appeal in controversial matters. The remark made by a writer in connection with a different department, that of Christian antiquities, is quite appropriate here. "We have tried to emphasise two points about archæology throughout. The first is, that it is of great value to the historian; the second, that it is apt to be disappointing to the controversialist. It will sometimes prove a certain amount, but it will never go quite so far as the latter wishes." (*Authority and Archæology*, p. 21).

The opposition attempted to be set up between Old Testament criticism and archæology is a false one; the subject-matter of the two departments is similar and the methods are the same.<sup>1</sup> It would be quite as correct to speak of Old Testament archæology as consisting of the study of ancient documents and monuments, according to scientific principles and critical methods. And in the region that is spoken of as strictly archæological, when once the monuments have been unearthed, the methods of work are the same; the text has to be fixed and translated, then its contents must be criticised, that is,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Chapter x. of *The Old Testament and the New Scholarship* by J. P. Peters.

interpreted and compared with other sources of information. If the student is dealing with works of art or coins, the intellectual process of comparison and classification is the same. The setting up, in a general way, of these two branches of study against each other is liable to create a false impression, and it can only have the effect of misleading those who are not accustomed to think very carefully and clearly. The only sensible way is, here and elsewhere, to ignore such false distinctions, and, taking one important point at a time, ask what information can be obtained with regard to it from any or every quarter. If we wished, however, a general statement from a reliable source, that of Dr. Driver would meet the purpose. He tells us that two of those who are most prominent in polemic against the results of criticism, namely, Drs. Sayce and Hommel, do not distinguish clearly between the direct and indirect testimony of archæology. "Examples of the direct testimony of archæology have been furnished by the Books of Kings, though, as it happens, these have related mostly to points on which there has been no controversy, and on which the Biblical statements have not been questioned" (*Authority and Archæology*, p. 144). And again: "The fact is, the antagonism which some writers have sought to establish between criticism and archæology is wholly factitious and unreal. Criticism and archæology deal with antiquity

from different points of view, and mutually supplement one another. Each in turn supplies what the other lacks ; and it is only by an entire misunderstanding of the scope and limits of both that they can be brought into antagonism with one another. What is called the 'witness of the monuments' is often strangely misunderstood" (*Authority and Archæology*, p. 150). This statement comes from a careful critic, who is noted for his soberness of judgment as well as his accurate scholarship. Our archæological friends are looking forward to still more wonderful discoveries, but it will be time enough to estimate the value of these when they arrive.

Suppose we ask a definite question, namely, What is the age of the world and the date of man's creation? Those who attempted to compile a chronological scheme resting on Biblical dates, fixed this event at a point six thousand or seven thousand years distant from the present time. The deluge was then regarded as a literal historical event which took place about two thousand years after the creation. Can we go to archæology to vindicate the historical character of this traditional scheme? The answer is, that it has been rendered untenable from all directions. Physical science, in its various branches, teaches us that the earth is very old, and that man and other living creatures have dwelt upon it for countless ages. Criticism in the strictest sense, that is, a comparison

of the Hebrew documents and the study of Hebrew history, shows us that the chronological scheme does not belong to the earliest Hebrew tradition, but to the later scholastic age; it has no claim to Divine authority, and it does not possess the character of an ancient contemporary record; it is simply interesting as showing us the thoughts possessed by certain Jews at a particular period concerning the age and origin of man. Archæology demonstrates the fact that more than six thousand years ago civilised empires were in existence, having a long history lying behind them. There is no discrepancy here, the conclusions reached by the different branches of science point all in the same direction.

Very often, apologists, instead of facing the need for a reconstruction of our whole view of the Old Testament, which is caused by this proof that Genesis does not contain a literal history going back into the beginnings of life upon the earth, lay emphasis upon one point as being opposed to critical conclusions; namely, that writing is very old, and therefore Moses might have written the Pentateuch. We know that Israel came into Palestine about 1300 B.C., and, so far as we are concerned, that is the beginning of their national life and actual history. This means that the Hebrew people are not really an ancient people,—Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans are now to be regarded as comparatively late peoples,—

and the Hebrew language is not a primitive form of speech. This view is radically different from that which was held by intelligent men a century ago. Dr. Orr, in his recent attack upon the critical movement, puts it thus: "The entire perspective is altered, and it is felt that Israel is now rather to be regarded as a people on whom the ends of the earth had come in respect of civilisation" (pp. 396, 397). He rejoices in this, in so far as it brings an appreciable gain in the breaking up of older critical theories, but he does not seem to grapple with its far-reaching significance in relation to the Old Testament, though he is quite familiar with statements by leading scholars that the question as to the age of writing never played a great part in the discussion as to the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch. If the fact that writing is very old is such a powerful argument when taken alone, it might enable you to prove that Alfred the Great wrote Shakespeare's plays. But, as a matter of fact, the age of any document is settled by a great variety of reasons. The traditional view which served its purpose for centuries was consistent with itself, and it gave a well-rounded, systematic conception; the critical view, in its broadly accepted conclusions, is an attempt to get an interpretation of the documents which does justice to that literature, and at the same time fits into our whole scheme of science. But the strange

mixture of old and new that is presented by some archæologists and apologists is very difficult to comprehend; many of us feel that it confuses the issue instead of helping us to solve the great problem. A difficulty arises here: many people who know merely that these gentlemen, distinguished scholars in their own sphere, indulge in fierce attacks on criticism and critics, think that they are defending the traditional views of the Old Testament, when as a matter of fact the modifications they are compelled to make show that in many cases the controversy is a question of detail rather than of principle. For example, in his book on *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, Professor Hommel tells us that the higher critics have virtually gone bankrupt in their attempts to analyse the chapters and verses of the Old Testament books; but he admits that there are several sources, and recognises two documents in Genesis; and later, when he comes to deal with the fourteenth chapter of that book, he finds traces of two recensions, which he prints in parallel columns. According to Professor Sayce, the archæological results show that critics are foolish in maintaining that the Biblical story of the Flood is composite; according to Professor Hommel (*Die altorientalischen Denkmäler und das alte Testament*, p. 31), "it cannot be denied that the Biblical story of the Deluge is made up of two different accounts." Here are two leading archæologists

holding opposite views in detail of criticism. Of course, in a matter of this kind, each man has a right to his own opinion, each opinion must stand on its own merits, and we only point to this diversity here, among men of the same school, in support of our general thesis, that there is no clear consensus of opinion among archæologists against the results of criticism; and that, while the members of this particular school of archæologists reject some of the results generally accepted by Old Testament scholars, they have themselves gone far from the traditional standpoint.

Dr. Hommel, while claiming to be as far as the poles asunder from Wellhausen, says "the old orthodox teaching as to inspiration must be given up for ever" (*ibid.*, p. 34); simply because the facts are against it, that is, it does not harmonise with the present condition of the Hebrew text.

Indeed, when we come to review the question along the whole line, we shall find that the difference between archæologists and critics, even when they do differ, is not as great as it seems. We will not attempt any discussion in this chapter of "the primitive history," that is, the stories contained in Gen. i.-xi., but proceed to ask how we are to interpret the patriarchal narratives. On the old view these stories are literally true; and they give a faithful account of the origin of the Hebrew people; from one man, Abraham,

there sprang in a certain number of years the twelve tribes, which after their deliverance from Egypt were led through the wilderness into Palestine, and formed the Hebrew nation of early days and the Jewish people of later times. Thus the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are correct, detailed biographies of the ancestors of the Hebrew people, fitted into a brief historical framework which gives an outline of the history of the world and the origin of the nations. What is to be said now to this explanation of these ancient stories? One thing we may safely say, that no scientific student in any department takes exactly this view, that is, in the sense in which it used to be taken.

The critical view held now by the large majority of Old Testament scholars is, that what we have here is not history in the strict sense, but a free poetic treatment of certain meagre historical traditions. The documents do not come from the age to which they refer, but we have here popular stories that were current among the people centuries later, and that were finally committed to writing; the names and figures belong to the pre-historic age, but in a large measure we meet with ideas of a later time. While these stories come before us in a very personal form, so that we seem to be reading individual biographies, we cannot take them as the literal account of the origin of a nation, and we cannot be sure that all these



incidents actually occurred, precisely in this order, in the lives of these patriarchs. But as pictures of ancient Oriental life, in various forms, these stories are true and beautiful, they are in the first class of the department of literature to which they belong. For simple story-telling, for pictures of real life, the Hebrew language is unsurpassed. As a living literature instinct with noble moral ideals and subtle spiritual suggestion, the Genesis narratives, with all their simplicity and childlikeness, reflect the deep religious life of faithful men, and show us how God spoke to men in an age distant and different from our own. Hence we have in these stories at least two kinds of history. There are many features of ancient tribal and national history embodied or reflected in such narratives: and scholars are seeking, in various ways, to discover their precise significance, with more or less success, though we have to admit that much of the work done here is, like other archæological and literary researches, of a somewhat speculative and tentative character. Then there is the history of religious ideas; we have here the practical beliefs and theological ideas of the early prophetic age of the Hebrew people when these ancient stories were used as a means of instruction and inspiration. Thus criticism seeks to draw from these ancient pictures all the history that lies behind them and all the suggestions that they are fitted to inspire.

What can the archæologists make out of these stories for us? They tell us that names similar to those of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have been found in the inscriptions. They write chapters entitled "Babylonia at the time of Abraham," in which we may find all that they have learned and conjectured concerning Babylon at the time when Abraham is supposed to have lived; but one can read through these chapters without finding the slightest trace of Abraham or anything else connected with the Hebrew stories. A very superficial reading of these works will soon show that what Dr. Driver says, in the following words, of one is true of all those attempts to show that the monuments confirm things which they never mention. "What Professor Sayce has done is firstly to draw from the monuments a picture of Palestine as it was in pre-Mosaic times, then to work the history of the patriarchs into it (chap. iv. of *Patriarchal Palestine*), and, having done this, to argue, or imply, that he had proved the historical character of the latter! It is, of course, perfectly legitimate for those who, on independent grounds, accept the historical character of the narratives of Genesis to combine them with *data* derived from the monuments into a single picture; but those who undertake to *prove* from the monuments the historical character of Genesis must, at all costs, distinguish carefully between statements which rest exclusively upon the authority of these

narratives and those which depend upon the testimony of the monuments; if they fail to do this, misunderstanding and confusion will inevitably result. Professor Sayce, unfortunately, often neglects this distinction; and confuses the illustration of a narrative, known, or reasonably supposed to be authentic, with the confirmation of a narrative the historical character of which is in dispute. It is highly probable that the critics who doubt the presence of any historical basis for the narratives of the patriarchs are ultra-sceptical; but their scepticism cannot, at least at present, be refuted by the testimony of the monuments" (*Authority and Archæology*, p. 149). This is a fair, unprejudiced statement of the whole situation. Further, when archæologists speak of a confirmation of the tradition, they do not really mean a proof that the Biblical statements as to the coming of Abraham into Palestine are to be taken quite literally. They evidently mean that these individual names represent the movement of certain peoples or tribes; this is implied in Professor Hommel's whole treatment of the subject, though his manner in presenting the supposed facts does not always make this as clear as might be desired. Dr. Pinches has this statement regarding the twofold name of the patriarch: "When, however, it was revealed to Abram that he was to stay in the Promised Land, a change was made in his name—he was no longer

known by the Assyro-Babylonian name Abram, 'honoured father,' but in view of the destiny appointed for him, he was to be called Abraham, 'father of a multitude of nations.' "

"The first stratum of the Hebrew nation was therefore, to all appearance, Babylonian, the second stratum Aramean, probably a kindred stock, whilst the third was to all appearance Canaanitish. All these must have left their trace on the Hebrew character, and, like most mixed races, they showed at all times superior intelligence in many ways" (Pinches, *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, p. 148). As a specimen of the unanimity of archæologists, it may be noted that Dr. Hommel has a far-fetched explanation of the twofold form of the name, which leads him to reject Gen. xvii. 5 as an interpolation; thus he can find interpolations in the Priestly narrative when these are required by his own theory, but he is very suspicious of this minute criticism when exercised by others.

Suppose we inquire of these scholars, Where was this Ur of the Chaldees, the home from which Abraham set out on his journey? According to Hommel it was in South Babylonia; and he has much to tell us about "the kings of Ur" and the condition of that region in what he calls the times of Abraham. One of his clearest statments is, "In conclusion, I must not forget to

point out that the journey of Abraham and his family from Ur Kashdim (*i.e.* Ur of the Chaldees), in South Babylonia, to Haran in Mesopotamia, must be regarded as a kind of prototype of that greater migration of the Aramaic nomads which afterwards ensued from the land of Kir into Mesopotamia" (Hommel, *Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, p. 211). Dr. Pinches has a somewhat different tale to tell; we must take his own statement, which is extremely interesting from many points of view. He says: "There can be no doubt, therefore, that the theory that Abraham lived and passed his earlier years at the Ur which is now represented by the ruins of Mugheir, originated with the Jews during their captivity at Babylon and in the cities of Babylonia. Eupolemus, as a student of Jewish history, would naturally get his information from a Jewish source; and the Jews had, in common with most of the nations of the earth, a tendency to attribute to their own forefathers, whom they venerated so highly, the glory of being connected with any renowned city or great discovery of earlier ages. Thus it arises that Eupolemus, following his Jewish informant, makes Abraham to be the inventor of astrology and Chaldean magic, and to have dwelt at Ur. It must have been the Jewish captives exiled in Babylonia who first identified Ur with the renowned city Uru or Uriwa, quite forgetting that the form of

the name could not have been Ur in Hebrew, and that there was another Ur, much more suitable as the dwelling-place of a nomad family like that of Terah and his sons, namely, the country of Akkad itself, called, in the non-Semitic idiom, Uri or Ura, a tract which included the whole of northern Babylonia" (Pinches, *The O.T. in the Light of the Historical Record*, etc., p. 197). If this had no name we might imagine it was from one of the "heretical" higher critics instead of from an "orthodox" archæologist. Note, however, the candour and simplicity of the next few lines.

"In whatever part of Babylonia, however, the patriarch may have sojourned, of one thing there is no doubt, and that is, that if he dwelt there, the life which he saw around him, and in which he must have taken part, was that depicted by the tablets translated in the foregoing chapters." This simply means that if we had dwelt there, we would have seen and taken part in the life depicted on these tablets. In this connection there is much virtue in "if."

Now it appears from the Bible that the traditions vary as to the original home of the ancestors of the Hebrews. We know that later Jewish tradition sought for Ur in Babylonia, and the name Ur may have come down from ancient times; if so, it has left only a faint trace in the Hebrew writings, compared with the strong

remembrances of their intimate relations with the Arameans of Mesopotamia. But the fact is that the results of archæology do not enable us either to prove or reject this particular tradition. "Contract-tablets and other contemporary inscriptions, recently discovered, bear witness to the fact that in, or even before, the age of Abraham persons bearing Hebrew (or Canaanitish) names resided in Babylonia, and show that intercourse between Babylonia and the West was more active than was once supposed to be the case; but nothing sufficiently direct has at present (June 1903) been discovered to prove definitely that the ancestors of the Hebrews had once their home in Ur" (Driver's *Genesis*, p. 142).

But it may be asked, Why do you trouble so much about these dry and apparently unessential details, and especially why insist upon the negative character of the conclusions reached, when these negative conclusions are so distasteful to many pious people? It would be sufficient to say that whether the point is small or great we wish to get as near to the truth as we can, and state facts simply as they are. Further, we must pass through negative conclusions to a new positive interpretation. The preacher must know something about the nature of these stories and the history that lies behind them, if he is to use them in intelligent exposition. When he is prepared

to admit that they are not history, in the literal scientific sense, or that the ancients had an idea of history different from our own, he will learn that in another sense, quite as legitimate and as deep, they are very powerful histories; in them he will find the story of man's search after God and the revelation of the Divine pity and helpfulness. Then, as an apologist, he will not make the fatal mistake of treating the literal truth of such stories as the essential foundation of the Christian religion. It is sometimes argued that if these stories are not literally true, then our faith in Jesus Christ and in the teaching associated with His name must be weakened. This is very poor policy just because it is not good sense. We may make up our minds that historical questions must be settled by the study of history and not by appeals to fear. There is no need to fear the truth; these ancient stories with their charming simplicity, their vivid pictures of life, their descriptions of man's weakness and their visions of God's nearness, can never be lost. Such spiritual treasure the world will not willingly let die. Abraham and Jacob are more to us than actual and limited individuals could be; they are more than portraits, they are types and ideals. They represent the faith and hope of a people that, in spite of all its weaknesses, has for ages been to the world a messenger of the Divine. So long as men feel the vanity of mere things



and hunger after God, the faith of Abraham, the life-struggle of Jacob, and the purity of Joseph can never be idle tales or empty dreams. These stories, if they do not tell in literal form the history of the nation's origin, have their own tale to tell. They express in powerful poetic forms the faith that the personal career and national life are shaped by God for the satisfaction of noble souls and for the service of humanity. They without us were not made perfect, and we without them would be poor indeed.

## CHAPTER IV.

### ASSYRIOLOGY AND THE OLD TESTAMENT.

THE critical study of the Old Testament has now lying behind it many centuries of strenuous life, and some of the most important results of what we call, in the strictest sense, "the modern movement" have stood for a century or longer. During that century new languages have been discovered and deciphered, and new departments of linguistic and archæological research have come into being and enlarged their borders. Much of the energy and enthusiasm manifested in connection with Oriental archæology was quickened by the thought that in this region would be found illustration and confirmation of the sacred records of the Hebrew people. This has had its advantages in leading large numbers of people to take an interest in new fields of research; but it has not been without its drawbacks, as the calmness of scientific inquiry has often given place to the fierce heat of popular discussion, and the religious public has been treated to all kinds of fantastic "confirmations"

of the sacred records. This will, no doubt, continue for the benefit of those whose faith in the Bible is of the kind that constantly craves external support; but the subject has now grown to such a size that any intelligent inquirer can see that in the interests of pure science this new field of ancient history has its own claims, and that those who devote their lives to its cultivation deserve our respect and gratitude whether they deal directly with the Old Testament or not. In recent discussion this has been fully acknowledged, and Old Testament students have at all times held themselves ready to take or receive all available help from the workers in the department of Assyriology, and to give due credit for the same. But they protest against the tendency to "Babylonianism," or against the effort to swallow up Hebrew literature and life in the great stream of Babylonian culture and religion. That point, however, must be reserved for separate discussion.<sup>1</sup> All that can be attempted now is a statement of a more general character as to the growth of this new science and its relation to Old Testament criticism.

In 1802, Grotefend made a beginning in the work of deciphering the ancient cuneiform inscriptions, but at first the progress was exceedingly slow; during the last fifty years, however, not only have the actual finds of material been larger

<sup>1</sup> See Chapters V. and VI.

and more important, but the number of scholars engaged in the field has increased and the quality of scholarship has improved, owing to the greater amount of material and the more scientific methods. This will, no doubt, continue until several new chapters are added to the history of mankind and many old ones are re-written.

Three new languages have been deciphered, the Assyrio-Babylonian, the ancient Sumerian, and the hieroglyphics of Egypt; and thus scholars have been enabled to reconstruct in some measure the ancient life of nations whose material remains had been long buried, and whose history had been very largely forgotten. From the name of one of these ancient empires has been taken the designation of the most important language, and the field of linguistic and archæological research connected with it.

Assyria was practically the last great Semitic State that played an important part in the region of the Tigris and the Euphrates. After the fall of the Assyrian capital, Nineveh, in 606, Babylon under Nebuchadrezzar once more came to the front, but lost its supremacy fifty-seven years later, when Cyrus captured that city and transferred the centre of his far-reaching empire to Susa. The history of Israel was for some centuries influenced by its relationship to Assyria, and, indeed, before the discovery of these ancient monuments, the Old Testament was the chief

source of information regarding the policy and action of the Assyrian Empire. The inscriptions and monuments from which a larger knowledge was first gained came from the ruins of Assyrian cities. In fact, a large part of the ancient Babylonian literature has come to us by way of Assyria. Hence the names Assyrian and Assyriology have quite naturally been applied to the whole field of research, though the Assyrian Empire was a young offshoot of the Babylonian nation, and occupied only a small portion of the territory in question, on the left bank of the middle Tigris. "The actual seat of the civilisation, its home in the narrower sense, and with that the seat of political dominion in the old, and the oldest time, lies farther down the stream on the Euphrates. Since we name this country Babylonia from its chief city, Babylon, so must the whole civilisation—and with it the speech and writings of the monuments—be more correctly called Babylonian" (Winckler, *Die babylonische Kultur*, p. 8).

We have, then, to remember that, while the origin of the name Assyriology is easily explained, it is merely a conventional term, and the subject included under it is much wider than a literal interpretation of the name would suggest; it introduces us into the wide and ever-increasing field of ancient Babylonian history. The first great change is that the history of the world, the

story of man and his action upon the earth, is immensely extended, the prehistoric period is already pushed back over three thousand years. And what we find at that period is not the beginnings of human culture, but a very elaborate and complex form of civilisation, which has reached full maturity and attained its distinctive character. We find a great empire with rich material resources, a complex social order, a powerful military organisation, and lying behind this a conception of the physical and spiritual universe which is at the same time scientific and theological. The historians tell us that two thousand years earlier, that is, 5000 B.C., city states were in active life throughout the region of Babylonia, with varied forms of political and religious life. The history of this early period cannot, of course, be written with any fulness of detail, even the bare outline that is presented has in it much that is conjecture of the most uncertain kind. But sufficient is known to show us that men who take an interest in the history of the human race and the growth of all forms of science and theology, must be prepared to receive new light and revise many of their opinions. This applies, of course, to all spheres of historical research that are concerned with the growth of culture and the development of religious ideas. It is claimed that the mythology of the ancient Babylonians has left its mark on the literature

and religion of all nations. Even in unexpected places, beliefs and customs are found which can be completely explained only when traced back to the birthplace of astronomy and astrology, where they are really at home. This seems to be proved in many cases, though the time and manner of such borrowing are quite uncertain. It is well known that many things which we use without thinking of their origin, such as the common divisions of time and space, had a Babylonian beginning. The twelve double hours on a watch, the association of the days of the week with the names of star gods and similar things, as well as popular superstitions, such as the unlucky number thirteen, the unlucky bird the raven, and the unlucky day Friday, find their explanations in Babylonian astronomy. Some things which linger with us merely in the form of hereditary superstitions may be seen there as part of the scientific theology of that day, or as things that the science of those early days had not been able to conquer completely. This being true, it follows that, as we draw nearer in time and place to the home of that ancient civilisation, the signs of its influence become clearer and stronger. Many things in the life of ancient Greece and Rome will, no doubt, receive their explanation from this source, without in any sense impairing the individuality and value of their special contribution to the world's life.

Speaking of the "miracle" of the life of Greece, it has been well said, "Archæology, and Homer, read in the light of archæology, supply a better reason of the seeming miracle. Hellenic civilisation developed in the direction of art with such marvellous celerity, simply because the tradition of an earlier and high culture was still existent among a considerable element of the population in both European and Asiatic Greece. The ground was prepared from of old, the plant was alive but dormant; models existed already; methods of fabric and principles of decoration were there to be learned from others, and had not to be evolved anew by long and painful experiment. After a century or so of restlessness and struggle came a time of peace in the Greek lands, and inevitably with it another and the greatest renaissance of the endemic spirit of art. By so much archæology may claim to have explained away the miracle; it can show whence came the vehicles of Hellenic self-expression, and why the Hellenes employed the vehicles they did. But, like all archæology, it does not explain the existence of the Hellenic spirit, or tell us whence the Greek derived the political, the social, or the religious ideals which lifted him above his fellow-men. And so in this microcosm, as in the universe, we come back to miracle. We trace back the circumstance and the house of life, but not life itself" (*Authority and Archæology*, p. 250).



These wise words can, with the necessary modifications, be applied to the discussions in Old Testament history, and they show why we ought to welcome any new light bearing on either words or facts, on the literary evolution or the political development. No one can really explain away the wonderful manifestation of the religious life among the Hebrew people, or by any process of sound reasoning lessen the value of its peculiar contribution to the life of the world. The efforts that are made to get at the heart of this mystery show us how much there is to explain and to bear testimony to its real greatness and abiding significance. If we are impressed by the "miracle" that lies behind, if we feel that we are here in the presence of a peculiar manifestation of the Eternal Spirit, there is all the more need to pay devout attention to the form in which this throbbing, growing life finds its way into the history of the world.

Hence, when Professor Hommel reminds us (*Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, Preface, p. xv) of the great wealth of material in the form of ancient inscriptions that need careful study and classification, and suggests that "the younger school of Old Testament theologians" should leave barren speculations as to the source of this or that fraction of a verse and devote themselves to these new first hand sources of knowledge; we are driven to say that, while all light from outside

sources must be ever welcomed, Hebrew literature is itself an important field which will always need special study. We trust, then, that while the younger men will be able to take a larger outlook, they will not make Old Testament criticism a small subordinate division of Babylonian history. The statement from the same source, that "it is from *external evidence*, therefore, that the final decision must come," is also a very questionable one, and will bear considerable explanation and criticism. Without entering into any discussion of this question, we may point out (1) that the political development and religious life of a people must be interpreted from its own documents; and (2) concerning facts of history which might be affected by external evidence, Assyriologists do not give harmonious evidence. (Compare Winckler's position with that of Hommel and Sayce.) This boasted "external evidence" is often a wonderful network of conjectures woven out of a variety of uncertain "facts"; like all other evidence, it can be interpreted through the dogmatic prepossessions of those who handle it. The statement of this apostle of external evidence, that "it has been the ill-fortune of the higher critics to elaborate and perfect their historical theories without paying any serious attention to the results brought to light by Assyriologists and Egyptologists," is scarcely correct. Of course, Old Testament scholars of the last generation

were ignorant of the archæological discoveries of our day, just as we must do our work in ignorance of the future discoveries ; but this does not by any means prove that the work of earlier scholars was in vain. On the other side, we have seen harm done by hasty and extravagant appropriations of these new "results." We cannot forget that the Jerahmeel theory, which has left its trail all over the *Encyclopædia Biblica*, and has caused the great services of Dr. Cheyne to be almost forgotten in the laughter and contempt which this fad has provoked, came to us from the archæological quarter. It was simply a violent attempt to apply a theory based upon the external evidence to the complete reconstruction of the text and history of the Old Testament. We wish at this particular point to avoid even the appearance of controversy, but we are compelled to utter a protest against the idea that the Assyriologist, as such, can do the work of the Old Testament critics, or that Assyriology can, in any easy fashion, save us from the dangers of reckless conjecture and hasty judgment.

The Old Testament, which stood alone in the darkness that encompassed the distant past, has now received a background and an atmosphere in which it can be more intelligently studied. Professor Delitzsch states this clearly in the following paragraph, and its truth is not questioned by any Old Testament scholars. "The Old

Testament formed a world by itself till far into the last century. It spoke of times to whose latest limits the age of classical antiquity barely reached, and of nations that have met either with none or with the most cursory allusion from the Greeks and the Romans. The Bible was the sole source of our knowledge of the history of Hither Asia prior to 550 B.C. ; and since its vision extended over all that immense quadrangle lying between the Mediterranean Sea and the Persian Gulf, and stretching from Mount Ararat to Ethiopia, it naturally teemed with enigmas that might otherwise have tarried till eternity for their solution. But now the walls that formed the impenetrable background to the scenes of the Old Testament have suddenly fallen, and a keen invigorating air and a flood of light from the Orient pervades and irradiates the hoary book—animating and illuminating it the more as Hebrew antiquity is linked together from beginning to end with Babylonia and Assyria."<sup>1</sup>

This means, as we have stated before, that the discoveries of the nineteenth century have supplied the political background and the general literary and religious atmosphere in which the Old Testament has to be placed ; but, as we shall see, there is room for a great variety of opinion when we try to settle precisely in what way

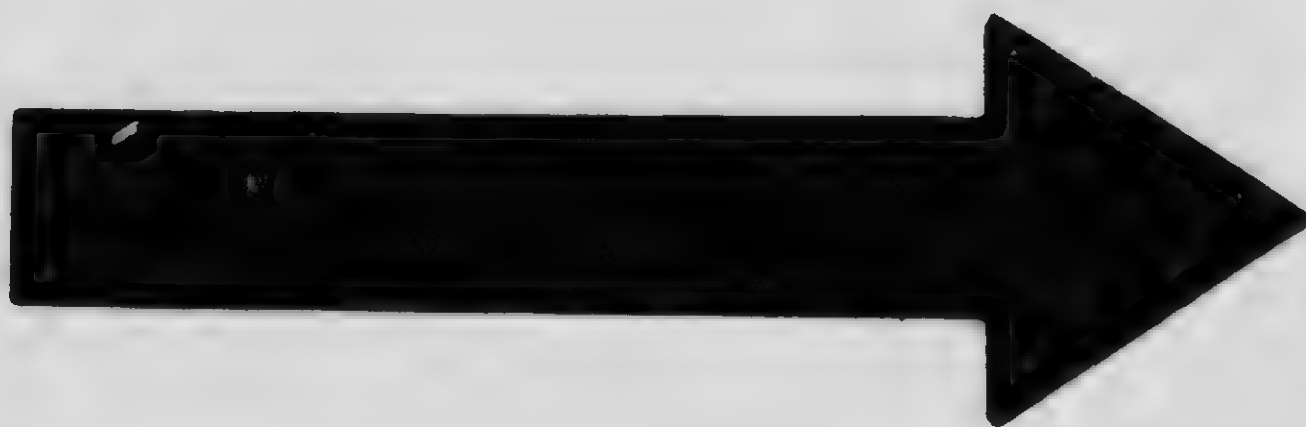
<sup>1</sup> *Babel and Bible*, p. 3.

Hebrew life is linked to that of Babylonia. Old Testament critics of the modern school are quite prepared to admit that many imperfect elements clung to Hebrew religion, and they are willing to number among these the exclusiveness which marked one side of the religion; further, they rejoice to learn that there were so many noble elements in the religion of ancient Babylonia; but they maintain that, when all allowances have been made for the powerful influence of pre-existing civilisations and neighbouring nations, the Old Testament tells a clear story of the independent development of a wonderful people and a noble faith. In other words, Old Testament students are jealous for the originality of this great literature to which they have given their time and energy, and they are prepared to prove that the tremendous power of the Hebrew faith comes out more clearly as we observe the way in which it uses common Semitic forms of story and song.

Professor Delitzsch has, no doubt, rendered good service in calling popular attention to the fact which has all along been recognised by students, that these new and larger discoveries in ancient Oriental literature must shed light not only on the general situation out of which the Old Testament grew, but also on details of geography, language, history, and theology. If we are to read with keen appreciation the records

of the life of the Hebrew people, we must enter as deeply as possible into Oriental methods of thought and expression. But surely this distinguished scholar goes a long way when he says, "Why Jesus chose the Samaritan to be the pattern of the universal love which should encompass all men and nations without distinction, can now be fully comprehended for the first time." The parable to which he alludes does not seem to gain anything in meaning and force from the obscure ethnology that is here tacked on to it. After maintaining that in the Code of Hammurabi love and mercy came to their rights, he says, "In fact, why waste further words, when it was shown at the beginning of the lecture that the Samaritans are really Babylonians as far as character is concerned, and that the Jews pass for Kuthæans, that is, really Babylonians! Jesus Himself has erected a monument to universal neighbourly love, an ideal of the Babylonians, great-hearted in this point, too, in His divinely spiritual parable of the Good Samaritan, which towers perceptibly above the whole terrestrial globe! Yes, indeed, not only do Babel and Bible clasp hands in brotherly fashion whenever in the wide world Samaritan service is rendered, but the Babylonian has been set up by Jesus as a pattern for all mankind: 'Go and do likewise'" (*Babel and Bible*. Three Lectures. Open Court Pub. Co., p. 202).

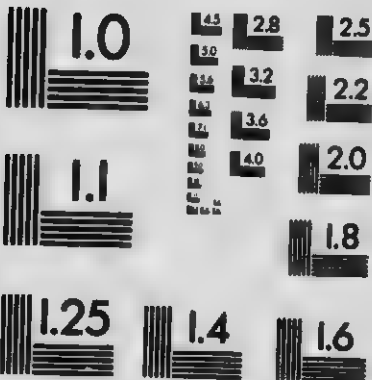
Another illustration of this kind of extravagance may be cited from an Assyriologist of a different type. Dr. Pinches seeks to cast some light from this quarter on the interpretation of the phrase "sons of God," Gen. vi. He tells us that the Babylonians often used the phrase "a son of his god" to designate a just man or something similar; and so "sons of God" in the Hebrew passage may mean pious men (*The O.T. in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria and Babylonia*, pp. 85, 115). To this we would reply that the Babylonian phrase, even if it is correctly interpreted, is not exactly the same; and second, the Hebrew phrase should be explained from the Hebrew usage. But after we have taken the trouble to make this reply we find that after all the real Babylonian usage seems to be the same as the Hebrew, for a few pages farther on we have the phrase "sons of Babylon," meaning a Babylonian, just as "sons of God" means beings having the nature of God. Of course it is quite clear that the ancient records do, in a great variety of ways, throw light upon the Hebrew Scriptures; but in these investigations we must clearly discuss each point on its own merits, and not press the material too hard to make it conform to our own views. One man may manipulate the material in a somewhat one-sided fashion because he wishes to





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apologise for the Old Testament, and another may do the same thing because he wishes to glorify Babylon. It is evident that the "external evidence" from this sphere cannot be very powerful to settle important questions of Biblical criticism until there is more unanimity among those who furnish the evidence. Surely the same evidence does not justify the view that the patriarchal stories are substantially historic, and the opposite view that they are a series of astral myths? The Old Testament specialists are patiently seeking to disentangle all the threads of the history, and they protest against the attempt to merge the life of Israel in the great stream of Babylonian culture.

We may conclude with a concrete illustration, a brief reference to one of the most important discoveries of the last century. In 1887 some fellahin were digging at Tel el-Amarna, about 170 miles south of Cairo, and came across a collection of over three hundred clay tablets written in the Assyrio-Babylonian language. Soon it was seen that there was here a wonderful treasure, in fact a body of diplomatic correspondence belonging to the fifteenth century B.C. This Tel el-Amarna was the site of the new capital built by Amenophis IV. as a centre for the worship of the Sun-god, of which he was an enthusiastic adherent. This particular king of Egypt has special significance,

as he represents an attempt at religious reform. It was because of his striving after a kind of monotheism in honour of the Sun-god that he founded this capital in place of Thebes, where rank polytheism prevailed. The new royal residence was called "the horizon of the sun's disk," and the king rejoiced in the name "light of the solar disk." Of course, there was the usual reaction which comes after premature religious revolutions, and the ancient city of Thebes soon recovered its former glory and influence. Nearly all these letters were addressed to the Egyptian emperor; thirty-six of these, which contain a quarter of the whole correspondence, came from the rulers and peoples of independent countries, as Babylon, Assyria, the Hittites, Mitanni, etc.; the other two hundred and sixty were sent by governors in Palestine, Phœnicia, and Syria, which were nominally dependent on the Egyptian king. Thus we are privileged to look into the correspondence of an Egyptian Pharaoh who lived and struggled with political and religious problems some 3400 years ago. This must, of course, be interesting and useful to the historian whether it bears directly on the Old Testament or not. If we are simply content to accept a certain amount of clear information as to the political condition of Palestine at that remote period, we shall find a flood of light; but if we allow ourselves to be overpowered

by an apologetic interest, we shall find ourselves entangled in hopeless obscurities.

Dr. Boehmer, a German pastor who writes in a journal which is set for the defence of the faith, declares that there is much caprice in the apologetic treatment both as to readings and explanation; many find all kinds of Biblical names and relations simply because they want to find them. One illustration of this may suffice. Hommel quotes from one of the letters written by the King of Jerusalem, "It was not my father, it was not my mother, but the arm of the mighty king, that placed me in my ancestral home." Then he gives the following wonderful argument: (1) There is a statement in Heb. vii. that Melchizedek was "without father and without mother," and as this does not occur in Gen. xiv. 18, it applies either to a different version of that text or an independent oral tradition which applied this phrase to the ancient officer of the priest-king. (2) The phrase "mighty king" in the letter reminds of the phrase mighty God, El Elyon, in Gen. xiv. (3) Therefore the letter throws light on Gen. xiv. and receives light from it (*Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, p. 154 ff.). We are very glad to receive light on Gen. xiv., but this contribution is of a very doubtful character. (1) According to Professor Hommel's own view, Gen. xiv. refers to a period nine hundred years earlier than the letter. (2) There is no proof

that the King of Jerusalem referred to in the letter was a priest; and (3) there is no mention in the letter of "God Most High." In fact, the whole construction is a fine specimen of lawless exegesis and unrestrained conjecture. On the significance of the phrase "without father," etc., cf. Flinders Petrie, *Syria and Egypt*, etc., p. 138.

Here as elsewhere, when we take a specific case we find that it is rich for instruction and illustration but poor for the purposes of controversy. For instance, Palestine appears here, as in the Old Testament, to be a country divided into a number of tiny States, each having as its centre a fortified city, while the weak places are open to attack by marauding bands. Egypt has the character that we have learned to know from the Hebrew story, a great power with rich resources, but slow to move and often unreliable, generally disappointing those who trust in her. Points of this kind might be multiplied, but they are points no sane man has doubted. If we wish to settle the precise date of "the Exodus," or to find out where the Hebrews were at that date, the "external evidence" fails us, and we are met by a bewildering variety of different opinions. The "Habiri" are mentioned, but who are they? Are they Hebrews, or Hittites, or an earlier immigration of tribes related to the Hebrews, or confederate bands, mercenary marauders having no necessary connection with the Hebrews? We

would like a definite, convincing answer to that question, but there is no unanimity among the critics.

We have, however, abundance of information concerning the general situation. Palestine is politically dependent upon Egypt, but the power of the over-lord is weak, his vassals are feeling the pressure of invaders, and call pathetically to him for help. The Egyptian supremacy is giving way; there is nominal headship but no effective control. This same region is from the point of view of civilisation and culture under Babylonian influence; the language in which the correspondence is written tells us this; the Assyrio-Babylonian language has the position that was taken at different times by Aramaic, Latin, and French; it is the channel of diplomatic communication. This does not mean that all the people are scribes and scholars, or that life in Palestine and Syria is a mere duplicate of that of Babylon.

We learn that Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and Mittani are the great powers of the then civilised world; and the kind of "concert" that they form is not unlike that of later times, when nations profess to act in unity while secretly intriguing for their own hand. As a picture of political life, these letters are full of interest, and in some things they do not seem to be so many centuries away. We find that the court officials are careful and business-like in their habits, keep-

ing a proper record of the correspondence confided to their care. Kings use courtly phraseology to each other, and are punctilious in their observance of form; one wishes to know why the King of Egypt's name is put before his, and enters into a long expostulation, only part of which has been preserved. There is the extravagant language of loyalty, real or pretended, which addresses the king as if he were a god; he gives life or death, he is the life-breath of his dependants; he is the sun which day and night, according to the ordinances of his father Shamash, arises on the land. Kings greet each other as brethren, and make passionate declarations of friendship; they exchange embassies, and marry into each other's families; they are anxious to receive gifts of gold and precious stones, and on these subjects their speech is more outspoken than that which courtly etiquette of the present time would tolerate. Thus it is a living world into which these letters introduce us, big in its own way though smaller than that of our own time, for in our days science has given a certain unity to the whole earth. In those days communication was slow and difficult; the civilised world was in a small compass, but travel was dangerous, roads were bad, and on the borders of each kingdom there were lawless bands of desperate men. It is an official society of which we have the picture, and there are many signs of meanness and corruption in it; still, as

we look at it we feel that the problems of life were very similar to those which we have to face. If from this very important discovery we cannot answer most pressing questions, or find an easy settlement of our critical controversies, we can, at least, gain a view of life's battle in that distant land and time to which we owe so much. It is not by any means a golden age in the spiritual sense, though the literal gold was as much worshipped then as now; and when we think of all the advantages that we enjoy after three thousand years of toilsome progress, we ought to say with gladness and gratitude that the lines are fallen unto us in pleasant places, and we have a goodly heritage.



## CHAPTER V.

### BABYLON AND THE BIBLE.

THOSE who have the slightest acquaintance with the history of Israel and the phraseology of the Old Testament are familiar with the conflict and contrast between the small struggling kingdom of the Hebrews and the proud Babylonian Empires. The bitter song of the exiles who sat and wept by the waters of Babel has made its appeal to sympathetic hearers through many centuries; and the pathetic cry, "How shall we sing Yahweh's song in a foreign land!" has stirred generations of men to pity and thoughtfulness. It is simply a continuation and extension of the Old Testament outlook when we use "Zion" as the symbol of the kingdom of God, the community formed of those who love truth and righteousness, and in the same breath speak of "Babylon" as the representative of those worldly forces that are specially selfish, arrogant, and cruel. Thus we still sing of the militant Church, and lament that "Zion in her anguish with Babylon must cope." This contrast, in the severe sharpness with which

we are familiar with it, comes to us from the Old Testament, and from the Apocalypse of St. John, where Jerusalem is the name of the ideal city that comes down from God out of heaven, and Babylon stands for the arrogant Roman oppressor for whose punishment the saints can justly cry out, and over whose downfall they may exult with righteous joy. There is something of the same temper six hundred years earlier, when the Prophet of Consolation calls upon "the virgin daughter of Babylon" to sit in the dust, and declares that she shall no more be called "The lady of kingdoms"; and when, in words that have been so richly illustrated in recent discoveries, he invites her to read her fate in her own scriptures, her own book of destiny: "Let now the astrologers, the stargazers, the monthly prognosticators stand up and save thee from the things that shall come upon thee" (Isa. xlvii. 13). Indeed, when we remember that the northern tribes of Israel were broken and scattered by the might of Assyria, and that the Jewish nation was crushed by Babylon, we can sympathise with the feeling of antagonism and to some extent with the cry for vengeance (Ps. cxxxvii.). Under the circumstances we are surprised that the bitter conflict has not left a deeper mark on Hebrew literature. We admit, of course, quite frankly, that this contrast expresses the Hebrew point of view; for our

purpose, it is sufficient if it sets forth an important truth, and does justice to a real situation; no thoughtful man would now dream of taking it in an absolute, unqualified sense. If any are so disposed to take it, they must now meet a strong challenge from the modern champions of the ancient Babylonian Empires. Some of these think that in the light of brilliant researches and unexpected discoveries they can easily turn to ridicule the exaggerated claims of Israel with all its proud religious pretensions and fanatical intolerance.

This question needs to be faced calmly and looked at impartially from all sides. No real student would ever think for one moment that all the virtues were embodied in Israel, and that Babylon was the incarnation of all the vices. The fiercest bigot has never gone to that length; and we cannot attribute such a thought to enlightened prophets and poets. But when all light from sources ancient and modern has been thrown upon the subject, it is still possible to maintain that there is historical justification for linking the religious ideal with the name of Zion, while Babylon stands, in the main, for worldly science, military organisation, and commercial success. In our own time the contrast between "the Church" and "the world," the "sacred" and the "secular," may be conceived in a mechanical manner, distorted by narrow prejudice or warped

by shallow bigotry, but there is something real in the contrast; the things thus opposed express different aspects of life, which unfortunately may come into violent opposition.

The Hebrew prophets, in the hour of their nation's sorrow, believed that Assyria and Babylon having served their God-appointed purpose would fall to ruin and decay, while Israel would come through the furnace of affliction possessing a larger life and a richer experience. History has surely justified this confidence; but more important for us than the fate of particular nations is this splendid faith, that religious sentiment and moral character are essential to national greatness. The monuments and inscriptions which testify to the intellectual culture and military power of those ancient nations only make the prophetic sermons the more impressive.

The Hebrew literature, in which we find these prophecies of the destruction of the ancient empires, has, in modern times, helped to bring back their buried life; for, while this department of history and archæology is now a large independent realm, in its earliest stages it owed much to the enthusiasm and self-denial of men whose supreme desire was that all possible light should be shed on the life and literature of Israel. Perhaps we may now say that this debt has been paid back with large interest when we consider that the language, history, and religion of Babylon

have thrown such a flood of light upon the Old Testament, and have thus enabled us to understand more fully the forms in which its sacred message is enshrined. Thus the lives of nations are strangely blended, and even in their antagonisms they minister to each other and to the life of the world. It is now proved that elements from the life of Babylon have been handed down in scientific or popular forms, and have, in many ways, entered into common experience; so that though these proud empires were swept away, and the monuments of their splendour covered with dust, yet their life was not completely lost, some imperishable thoughts and important truths lived on with their source was quite forgotten. On the other hand, there is a significant fact, important in the highest degree for those who wish to see the whole subject in the clear light. During those long silent years, when the cities of Babylon were buried, and, except for a few references in Greek and Hebrew literature, forgotten, the Old Testament was delivering its message to many nations, and making its contributions to the life of humanity. It spoke of the Power that makes for righteousness, and called upon men to believe in a living God who is the guide of history and the judge of nations. Something out of this wonderful book has entered into the world's noblest life, and though we may need to re-adjust our ideas on

many points, this fact of effective living ministry will always gain recognition from fair-minded men. Individual expositors may yield to prejudice and partiality on one side or the other, but the great world will see that substantial justice is done.

We rejoice that these new chapters are about to be written, and we wish success to the scholars who are working so earnestly at this immense and ever-increasing body of new material. We cheerfully acknowledge that the story of ancient Babylonia has its own interest and significance; there is something marvellously attractive in these pictures of social and religious life in times so far remote from our own. Long before Israel appeared upon the stage of history and received the training for her God-appointed task, devout and scholarly men had found manifestations of God's will in the regular order of the heavenly bodies, as well as in the strange longing of their own hearts. Babylon is ancient, scientific, imperial, and cosmopolitan; Israel is comparatively young, politically it is provincial, socially it is not brilliant, in the realm of science it is narrow and dependent; yet when we lay stress on these limitations we only cause the peculiar glory of this nation's life to stand out more clearly; it has its own individuality; its real leaders are men of genius, their ambition is to speak in the name of the eternal King, they hear the Divine message

and claim for it the supreme significance. The truth of this statement is in no wise lessened by the fact that Israel owed a debt to the earlier civilisation which had its home in Babylon, and used forms of thought and language that had been prepared by previous centuries of toil, while never capable of appropriating that culture in all its fulness and complexity.

It is important that this question of history and life should be fully discussed in a fair and impartial manner; there is no need to be anxious about "the nimbus of the chosen people" (cf. the Kaiser's Letter, *Babel and Bible*, p. 124), in so far as will has any reality, that it take care of itself. Whether we are Jews or Christians, we do well to show an intelligent loyalty to this great literature, and not shelter ourselves in any blind, bigoted fashion behind the glories of a bygone age. But we cannot profess that the Hebrew religion is no more to us than any other religion; in studying its genesis and growth, we must use the most scientific method of which we are capable; however, there is no need on this account to forget that our own religion has an organic connection with the ancient faith, and that in a very living sense we are children of the Bible. The interest and enthusiasm quickened by this thought will not only inspire thoughtful reverence, it will lift our science into a spiritual atmosphere, and thus help us towards a sym-

pathetic interpretation of the life and literature to which we owe so much.

What, then, must be our attitude in the face of the new Babylonian flood? Or, in other words, can we follow without reserve those who would make Israel a mere province of Babylon? This has been the subject of continuous and heated discussion, especially in Germany; and, while much of the controversy has been popular in character, yielding no new scientific results, yet, like all storms, it has tended, in some measure, to clear the air, so that those who look calmly may see how the real current of criticism runs. The mechanical view of inspiration has again been discredited and disclaimed, but there is no need to enlarge on that familiar fact. The influence of Babylon on the Old Testament has been emphasised, and, as we think, exaggerated by scholars of various shades of thought. The great body of Old Testament specialists, while maintaining the need of keeping an open mind towards all new discoveries, have sought to defend the original strength and the organic unity of our sacred book. This they have done not from any mere policy of compromise, but on the basis of their continuous and intimate study of the literature as a whole, and the relation of its different parts. If we once see that there is a living connection between the conceptions of truth at particular periods, or, in other words, if we believe in a religion that grows,



a revelation that advances in clearness, we shall be able to admit outside influence on the form in which these truths are expressed without believing in a slavish borrowing or copying. The answer then to "Pan-Babylonianism," in so far as this has any reality or oppressiveness, is to be found in criticism as a whole, in a study which passes beyond mere words and details to a clear conception of the general movement. Here is one good reason why the preacher who expounds particular texts from the ancient book should seek a clear view of the character and spirit of this whole historical movement in its relation to the life of the world; if he is not a mere lecturer on history, there are many subjects that he must treat in the light of history.

There is no longer any possibility of turning away from this discussion by laying stress upon the difficult nature of these newly discovered languages, the imperfect condition of many of these inscriptions, and the general unreliability of results and theories based upon these uncertain sources of information. So far as the outsider can judge, the greatest difficulties and the most delicate linguistic discussions gather round the proper names. In the hands of careful scholars, even imperfect documents may render great service; here, as well as elsewhere, imagination needs to be kept in check by sober reason. Infallibility is not to be expected here; ex-

aggeration was common enough in Babylon, and lying is not exactly a modern invention. But when fair qualifications have been made and proper warnings given, we know that there is a large and increasing quantity of new historical material which in the hands of careful scholars will be classified and interpreted so as to cast great light upon those distant periods which had formerly to be regarded as prehistoric. We do not believe that any important "result" will in the long run be accepted unless it can bear the fire of expert criticism from many quarters. When any sphere of research calls into play the intelligent activity of many earnest students, the peculiarities of individual scholars are checked by the general search for truth. All we can do is to compare the conclusions of specialists on each important question, and discuss every point fairly on its own merits. This is not easy, and, in the meantime, some interesting details may be left in a state of uncertainty; but, as it is a genuine attempt to get at the bottom of things, it is better than narrow fanaticism or light-hearted dogmatism.

Neither is there escape on the old theological line, which attempted to explain all similarities between Babylonian literature and the Bible from the idea of a "primitive revelation," which is to be found in the Bible in purer, more original forms, and elsewhere in distorted and degraded

shapes. In the present discussion, this venerable phrase, which indeed belongs to an antiquated theology, must be regarded as out of court, as this is an inquiry which must be kept as far as possible within the sphere of historical investigation and comparative literature. Speculative questions as to the nature of revelation cannot be handled directly, but one thing must be conceded, namely, that any theological conceptions that are closely bound up with the old system of chronology must be revised in the light which physical science and archæological discovery have thrown upon the age of the world and the life of man.

In a certain sense, we may say that the Hebrew nation was born about thirteen centuries before the Christian era; the history of the nation and its religion begins at that time. For the earliest period the historical material is scanty, and leaves us in uncertainty on many points. From the days of David and Solomon downward, there is more material to be used for a critical reconstruction of the history. The poetic stories in Genesis which relate to the pre-Canaanite period probably contain traditions reflecting the early experiences of the tribes in and outside of Palestine; naturally the work of disentangling the substance of this tradition from the forms of later days is a delicate operation which does not often lead to certain results. Still the work

done in the department of Hebrew history during recent years has been rich in interest and stimulus. While we can never hope to reproduce with precise accuracy the life of the distant past, it is probable that our picture of that past, both in its political and religious aspects, approaches more closely to the reality.

Coming back, then, to our specific subject, we note that the fact is generally recognised that for centuries before the Israelites came into the country, Palestine was under Babylonian influence. This does not mean that exactly the same stage of culture and the same forms of religious thought and customs were to be found here as in Babylonia; there was, no doubt, local character and colour that could never be completely crushed by a foreign scheme of thought. Ideas and usages travelled from the great centres of civilisation; this was all the more natural as the Babylonians were an older branch of the race from which came the Hebrews and the earlier inhabitants of Syria and Palestine. The Hebrews could not pass from the nomadic to the settled state, and come into contact with new circumstances and culture, without undergoing great changes in their national and religious life. Historians tell us that the strength of the civilisation in ancient Babylon was such that, though the country was several times overrun by new, hardy tribes, yet this civilisation held its own, and even subdued

the new-comers, so that they assimilated the Babylonian science and religion.

The case of Israel is different: the people come into a new land, a land where a certain type of Semitic religion prevails, and where Babylonian influence has been exceedingly strong, and they are *not* conquered in the spiritual sense; they build up a nation with remarkable individual character; their religion refuses to conform to the common type. This is an actual fact; its reality and significance are not lessened when we recognise that the popular religion in Israel often became weak and coarse, and that even the prophetic religion had higher and lower stages, containing within itself conflicting and apparently contradictory elements. This is merely to say that it was a living, growing religion, solving problems within itself and contending with dangers from without.

It is difficult to form a complete and systematic sketch of the theological ideas of that early time; but we know that it was under a religious impulse that the tribes were united for the conquest of the country; and that each forward movement was religious as well as political in its character. Hence we are driven to the conclusion that here was a religious faith possessing a certain intellectual simplicity and moral superiority. Such a faith must either grow and expand, or die. It was not possible to escape the influence of

Babylon and Egypt; still less to flee away from the atmosphere that had been created by the Canaanite religions. Neither was it possible to turn back to any ideal, simple life of the past. When we examine carefully this period of toil and struggle, we are convinced that Babylon did not create or inspire the life and religion of Israel.

Professor Friedrich Delitzsch, who is regarded as a special champion of Babylon, says, at the close of his first lecture: "Notwithstanding all this, however, and despite the fact that many liberal and enlightened minds openly advocated the doctrine that Nergal and Nebo, that the moon-god and the sun-god, the god of thunder, Ramman, and all the rest of the Babylonian Pantheon were one in Marduk, the god of light, still polytheism, gross polytheism, remained for three thousand years the Babylonian State religion—a sad and significant warning against the indolence of men and races in matters of religion, and against the colossal power which may be acquired by a strongly organised priesthood based upon it" (*Babel and Bible*. Three Lectures. Open Court Pub. Co., Chicago, p. 65).

This is a clear statement from one who cannot be suspected of unfairness towards Babylon; and, certainly, no complaint can be made against either the truth or the temper of the following paragraph, in which the same writer points to the limitations of Israel's religion: "Even the

religion of Yahveh, under the magic standard of which Moses united into a single nation the twelve nomadic tribes of Israel, remained infected for centuries with all manner of human infirmities, —with all the unsophisticated anthropomorphic conceptions that are characteristic of the childhood of the human race, with Israelitic particularism, with heathen sacrificial customs, and with the cult of legal externalities. Even its intrinsic worth was impotent to restrain the nation from worshipping the Baal and the Astarte of the indigenous Canaanite race, until those titanic minds, the prophets, discovered in Yahveh the God of the universe, and pleaded for a quickening of the inner spirit of religion with exhortations like that of Joel, 'to rend their hearts and not their garments,' and until the divinely endowed singers of the Psalms expressed the concepts of the prophetic leaders in verses which awaken to this day a living echo in the hearts of all nations and times—until, in fine, the prophets and psalmists paved the way for the exhortation of Jesus to pray to God in spirit and truth, and to strive by dint of individual moral endeavour in all spheres of life after higher and higher perfection—after that perfection which is our Father's in heaven "

Next, we may note that the international circumstances which allowed the Israelites to settle in Palestine, build up a nation, and organise a kingdom, were precisely the circumstances which

allowed the religion to develop in its own way. "But also here, at the beginning of the history of the people and State of Israel-Judah, we recognise the general situation of the Orient as the pre-condition for the development of the people, which now for half a thousand years grows up on the soil of Palestine. The State of Saul and David could only develop independently because at that time neither Egypt nor Babylon, which had by this time stepped into the place of Assyria, were able to lay hold of anything beyond their own narrow boundaries" (Winckler, *Abraham als Babylonier*, p. 35).

The danger to the purity and growth of the Hebrew religion, during the first four or five centuries after the settlement of Palestine, comes from the common customs of the country, and from the influence of Canaanite and Tyrian forms of worship. That Babylonian influence had in earlier times exerted some influence here need not be denied. But at the time of which we are speaking, the two great powers on either hand, Egypt and Babylon, were too busy with their own affairs to meddle with Syria and Palestine; hence, precisely at the time when the Israelite kingdom was formed, the direct influence of Babylon was weaker than at the earlier and later period. Thus, a study of historical circumstances connected with the growth of this people, when the religion was face to face with its first great social



problems, shows free space for original movement and individual development.

In the prophetic period, which comes next, there is still less need to consider the influence of Babylon on the nature of religion, though this is powerful in the realm of politics, and touches both the politicians and populace. The real religious leaders were opposed to foreign influence; they were beginning to lay down moral principles of universal application; the spirit underlying their teaching is one that must eventually pass beyond all barriers of tribe and nation (Amos i.). Their God was the ruler of the larger world; Assyria and Egypt were subject to His sway; the growth of the mightiest empires was checked by His will and limited by His purpose. This faith came to them by inspiration of the living God; theirs was a monotheism that had its roots in the clear preception of a divine kingdom and an abiding moral order. Later writers, disciples of great masters, can turn this faith into a doctrine, and set forth calm arguments for the supremacy of Yahweh, or a scornful polemic against the folly of idolatry. In Deutero-Isaiah it becomes a theology, but a theology all aglow with passionate hope and poetic enthusiasm. Jeremiah can recognise the supremacy of Babylon in the field of politics, and point to submission as a rational recognition of Providence; but he found his religion elsewhere, in the history of his people, in the message of

God to his own throbbing heart. If Ezekiel's style and imagery are more easy to match with Babylonian parallels, his doctrine can be explained only by studying it in connection with the history of his own people.

We are inclined to think that during the Exile, when the feeling against Babylon was bitter, the Jews would not take over anything from their hated foes; but it is well to remember that peoples of definite character cannot come into close contact without influencing each other. No doubt the Exile gave the Jewish teachers a wider outlook; it is possible, even at this period, that they learned some things from the larger nation. Probably these things were of the external kind connected with calendars and chronological schemes, things that did not touch the heart of their faith or even seriously affect their ritual. The post-exilic prophets, poets, and historians hold fast to the Hebrew tradition and do not show any great reverence for Babylon. The later apocryphal and apocalyptic literature comes under the sway of that luxuriant Oriental speculation which stands in such strong contrast to the sober teaching of the prophets. At this stage, however, what we call distinctively "the Hebrew faith" has grown to maturity and almost completed its special contribution to the religious thought of the world; it is beginning to be modified by Hellenic influence; soon the Jewish

Church as we meet it in the New Testament, a Church living too largely in the past, will have reached its final form. Then the world will need a new teacher, One who can reach the real heart of the past and carry it to a nobler future.

To illustrate the fact that there may be great similarity of form along with great difference of spirit, reference may be made to one of the apocalyptic books with which we are most familiar, the Revelation of St. John. This book occupies a special place in the New Testament literature on account of its rich Oriental imagery and highly symbolical character. It may be that much of the symbolism comes from traditional Semitic forms, but the spirit and purpose of the book are not Babylonian. From Babylon we derive not only the divine right of kings, but even the divinity of the king or emperor; we are told on high authority that this was a central thought of Babylonian theology, and we know quite well that, in this extreme form, the doctrine was hateful both to Jews and Christians. The early Christians protested earnestly against it, as the Jews had done two centuries earlier. "If the whole world was ordered according to the laws prescribed in the stars, so an arrangement of human society must be carried through according to the same precepts. As the heavenly, so must also the earthly rulers exercise their office

in a similar manner. The king appears mostly as the incarnation of the god himself, and is worshipped as such. The Ptolemies, the Seleucidæ, and the Roman emperors have in this pretension, which seems to us so monstrous, merely taken up the Oriental teaching of their lands and provinces. The conflict to which such a demand made by Antiochus Epiphanes led among the Jews is well known. Antiochus desired the worship of Zeus, but he himself was the incarnation of the god. The Maccabean insurrection was the consequence of the attempt to again force this Oriental doctrine upon the Jews" (Winckler, *Die babylonische Kultur*, etc.). It is quite clear, then, that there may be a close similarity in literary forms without slavish dependence in the system of thought; in fact, while the external appearance is similar, the substance of the faith may be in sharpest opposition.

There is no need to discuss here the claim that the name Yahweh, the name of Israel's God, is found on Babylonian tablets of the time of Hammurabi. That is a point that must be settled by historical evidence; and at present, judging from the different views held by leading specialists, we may say that the evidence is not decisive. It is not likely that this name was invented by Moses or the early Israelite teachers; and, in the future, fuller light may be thrown

upon its origin. The origin of the name is not of great importance in the present discussion, as Professor Delitzsch states that he does not on this account derive the Jewish conception of God from the Babylonian cosmology. The study of the names of the Hammurabi period leads him to "the renewed assumption that they are rooted in a religious conception different from the polytheistic views that were native in Babylon. What was the nature and value of that monotheism the contemporary sources do not enable us to determine, but only to infer them from the later development of 'Yahvism'" (*Babel and Bible*, p. 150). And it is a "misrepresentation" to attribute to him the idea that "the name and worship of Yahveh himself, united with a more or less definitely developed monotheism, was a primitive possession of Babylon" (*ibid.* p. 149). As a matter of fact, we are not able to define the nature of this early monotheism, if it really existed. We are called to judge its nature from its later developments; but the actual course of the development of "Yahvism" is to be found in the Old Testament; and this is a Hebrew, not a Babylonian development. No doubt many great spiritual movements have gone unrecorded, or have left few definite marks in the literary history; but, in the case of Israel, the great upward movement has left a pathway of light running through the centuries, shining brighter

and brighter unto the perfect day. Here we have distinct signs of such independence and originality as is possible in a world where all forms of life and modes of thought are closely knit together.

It is quite probable that in ancient Babylonia there were monotheistic movements of a scientific or political character. Men who studied so carefully the order of the world as seen in the heavenly bodies, must often have been driven to the thought of one power with many manifestations; men who were zealous for the supremacy of Babylon and the glory of its god, Marduk, sometimes attempted to claim for their deity the prerogatives and powers of other gods; but, on the testimony of those who have studied the matter most carefully, these speculations did not enter into the heart of the people or change the course of the nation's life. Babylon played its own part and gave many gifts to the world, but it cannot claim that we owe to it the reasoned, dignified, passionate monotheism of Judaism, Mohammedanism, and Christianity. This monotheism did not attain perfection in Israel; national limitation and sectarian weakness clung to it; but it was a living faith appealing to the noblest in men, and ever reaching out after larger things. In the wonderful prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah, a prophecy uttered in the face of Babylon, this mighty faith and noble creed finds worthy

expression ; here the ancient faith, both in form and spirit, comes near to the Christian ideal. In the words of that great poet, we may say, "It shall be to Yahweh for a name, for an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off" (Isa. lv. 13).

## CHAPTER VI.

### BABYLON AND THE BIBLE—*Continued.*

IN the previous chapter we attempted to show that Criticism vindicates the independence and originality of the Hebrew people in the sphere of religion; politically, Israel was influenced by many nations, and intellectually she was in many respects dependent on the great pre-existing Babylonian civilisation; but the great theological and spiritual contribution she has made to the life of the world comes through her own God-guided leaders. While the truth of this statement can be fully proved and abundantly illustrated, there is no need to deny that recent research has brought a new world to light, and, by giving a large new background to the Old Testament, has revealed many points of contact between Israel and Babylon. A careful examination of the details involved in this discussion will probably lead to the conclusion we have already reached, that any dependence of the Hebrew people on this ancient civilisation relates rather to the form of expression than to the essence of the faith.



It is too late in the day to deny the fact of this contact; the evidence is full, clear, and convincing. Neither is it satisfactory to say that, as scholars differ regarding the time and manner of such influence, the fact is therefore doubtful. It is quite possible for the fact to be absolutely certain while the explanations remain variable and uncertain. The attempts to explain away the fact have so far been feeble and vain. It is good to treat this question as a purely historical inquiry, and, in the meantime, keep clear of the more subtle theological discussions. On the one hand, to deny plain facts because they conflict with an outworn theory as to the nature of revelation, is a form of blindness; on the other hand, it is surely shallow and foolish to declare that the new light thrown on the relation of Israel to its ancient environment proves that the history of Israel reveals a purely human movement. To a deep philosophy, or, what comes to the same thing, to a simple faith in God, there is no such thing as a "mere human development" or "purely natural movement." However, we must leave to the philosopher or theologian the work of discussing the different questions concerning the "natural" and the "supernatural"; the present investigation is historical in its character; it is comparatively simple and concrete.

We may begin with a brief note on a subject that has aroused much discussion, namely, the

origin of the Sabbath. Professor F. Delitzsch, in the first lecture of the Babel and Bible series made the following statement : " The Babylonians also had their Sabbath day (shabattu), and a calendar of feasts and sacrifices has been unearthed, according to which the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of every month were set apart as days on which no work should be done ; on which the king should not change his robes, nor mount his chariot, nor offer sacrifices, nor render legal decisions, nor eat of boiled or roasted meats ; on which not even a physician should lay hands on the sick. Now this setting apart of the seventh day for the propitiation of the gods is really understood from the Babylonian point of view, and there can therefore be scarcely the shadow of a doubt that in the last resort we are indebted to this ancient nation on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris for the plenitude of blessings that flows from our day of Sabbath or Sunday rest." (*Babel and Bible*. Three Lectures. The Open Court Pub. Co. 1906, Chicago, p. 37).

This was just the kind of statement to cause fierce controversy, and it was given with great emphasis under circumstances that ensured for it the widest publicity ; and yet we are compelled to say that it is not the kind of statement we would have expected from such an eminent scholar ; it is loosely expressed, it does not distinguish carefully between fact and conjecture ; to the average

reader it suggests much more than it was intended to convey. For example, after the statement has been subjected to severe criticism from many sides, the author of it sums up the result and gently withdraws in the following words: "Accordingly we must acquiesce in the fact that the Hebrew Sabbath ultimately is rooted in the Babylonian institution. More than this was not claimed" (*ibid.* p. 156). We submit that the original statement does claim or imply much more than this.

We are not sure that the name *Shabattu* was applied to these specific days; we do not know that a seven-day week was then in existence in Babylon; it does not appear that the days here mentioned were general holidays or rest days for the people; we cannot trace back the process by which the seventh day was separated from its original connection with the moon; in fact, we know very little about any Sabbath in ancient Babylon, and what we do know, even when put together by the most favourable conjecture, leaves something very far from the fully developed Hebrew Sabbath or Christian Sunday. The process here seems to have been similar to that which has taken place in other cases: an institution or idea that existed in rudimentary form has shared in the growth and expansion of the Hebrew religion; it has been transformed and filled with new religious significance. The

Hebrew Sabbath runs through the year independent of the moon; it provides a day of rest for man and beast; the Deuteronomic writer gives it a humanitarian tone, the Priestly author regards it as belonging to the original constitution of the world, the prophets endow it with rich spiritual meaning, and, finally, Jesus Christ rescues it from superstition and bigotry, declaring that "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." The dim beginnings of this institution are lost in antiquity, but the spiritual history of it is revealed in the Hebrew documents, and through them has exerted a powerful influence over the higher life of the world. It is, then, only in a very remote sense that we can be said to be indebted to Babylon "for the plenitude of blessings that flows from our day of Sabbath or Sunday rest." Whatever may still be discovered concerning ancient Babylon, the fact must remain that the Sabbath as we know it, and the noblest thoughts that gather round it, come to us from the Hebrew people. Assemblies such as we now have once a week for the study of sacred scriptures and the exercise of simple intelligent worship, helped to keep alive the Hebrew religion in the dark days of the Babylonian exile; and through the bitterness and disappointment of that fruitful period this institution received new meaning and power. The whole of this Babel and Bible question tends to illustrate the fact

which is made quite clear in this one case, namely, that anything which passed over from Babylon to Israel received a new religious interpretation, and was set on the way of a higher development.

One of the most wonderful pieces of literature in any language is the story of the Creation and Paradise, contained in Gen. ii. 4b-iii. ; it is full of deep suggestions expressed in powerful poetic form. When we separate this piece from its context, and try to study it apart from the later theology that has been read into it, we find that it presents a fascinating picture of primitive man in relation to the God who is his King and Judge. There is much sadness in this picture of man's weakness and his silent submission to the all-powerful God. It is pathetic rather than tragic in its tone ; there is in it no sublime passion, no fiery conflict, no magnificent rebellion. The God pictured in this story is the supreme Lord ; the man, the woman, and the serpent are His creatures ; their destiny is controlled by His resistless will ; but the world that forms the background of the story is a small one, it is not the great cosmos of chap. i. ; the scene of the story is the ancient garden of the gods. The one God, Yahweh, is a judge who by skilful questioning goes to the heart of the matter, and in solemn oracles apportions to each offender his rightful share of punishment. Man is of the earth ; he comes from the soil, and with painful labour he

tills the ground to gain his daily bread; and his destiny is to return to the dust from whence he came. The innocence and ignorance of naked childhood has been exchanged for the painful experience of mature life; in gaining knowledge, man has tasted the bitterness of sin and sorrow. If we follow out all the details with fine analytic power, we may find the answers to many questions concerning man's origin and nature; to many of these questions science now gives a different or fuller answer, but the record of early thinking is still full of interest. The supreme thought seems to be that man in finding knowledge has found sorrow, because he has failed to gain that other great prerogative of God, eternal life. His knowledge does not save him from painful toil nor from his doleful destiny. There does not seem to be a conscious polemic against culture and in favour of the claims of the simple life. The peasant who comes before us in this story is simple enough, but there is no pride of simplicity, it is not a simplicity in which a man can glory and find great joy. It is a wonderful picture, with many germinal ideas in a small space; there is a deep knowledge of human nature revealed in each separate stroke, as well as in the effective arrangement of the several parts. Here is unconscious genius and deep religious strength; yet the total effect of the story is depressing, and it is not likely that when it was read or told separately it

suggested to the hearers anything that we could call a "gospel"; still less the elaborate speculative theology of later Jewish and Christian schools. As the expression of a particular phase of human life, it is, and must remain, one of the most precious and suggestive fragments that have come from early times.

After reading many discussions on the subject, we have come to the conclusion that there has not yet been discovered any Babylonian parallel to this story. Professor Delitzsch, after noting the significance of the story for the history of religion and for the New Testament theology, launches out in this dramatic style: "May I lift the veil, may I point to an old Babylonian cylinder-seal, on which may be seen in the centre a tree bearing pendent fruits; to the right a man, distinguishable by his horns, which are the symbol of strength; to the left a woman, both with their hands outstretched toward the fruit; and behind the woman the serpent? Is it not the very acme of likelihood that there is some connection between this old Babylonian picture and the Biblical tale of the Fall of Man?" (*Babel and Bible*, p. 48). Here our expectation was excited and the veil was lifted, but we did not see very much after all. This particular cylinder has been known for a long time, and many experts fail to see the connection, some even doubt whether it is really the figure of a serpent; they claim that the serpent is merely "a

meandering line " or "ornamental division." The figures are clothed, and there are other features which make the connection unlikely, or at least uncertain.

The following statement by Dr. Driver, like all his deliverances, is carefully expressed, and does full justice to the fact that we must acknowledge strong Babylonian influence in the *form* of these narratives. "The *material* side of the narrative was derived, there can be little doubt, from the representations and traditions current among the writer's fellow-countrymen, though not entirely of native origin. The narrative contains features which have unmistakable counterparts in the religious traditions of other nations; and some of these, though they have been accommodated to the spirit of Israel's religion, carry indications that they are not native to it" (Driver, *The Book of Genesis*, p. 51). After quoting details, he declares, "Enough will have been adduced to show that, though no complete Babylonian parallel to the story of Paradise is at present known, there are features in the narrative which point strongly towards Babylonia, and, in the light of the known fact that other elements in the early chapters of Genesis are derived from Babylonia, authorise the inference that echoes of Babylonian beliefs supplied, at least in part, the framework of the representation" (*ibid.* p. 53). There are, no doubt, features which are common to this and



similar Babylonian stories. The four rivers, perhaps a prosaic addition, take us into the region of Babylon; Eden also is in that neighbourhood; the cherubim, the garden of the gods, the tree of life, and other features may be Babylonian or belong to ancient Semitic poetry. But this does not justify us in calling the story, in its present form, Babylonian, any more than we can give the credit of Shakespeare's plays to the ancient Chronicler. The theology is Palestinian, it comes from men of the Hebrew race who had been touched by the prophetic spirit. Even here the supremacy of Yahweh asserts itself, Babylonian demonology is subdued, if not completely rejected; Israel's God is regarded as the absolute Ruler of the world and of all creatures in it.

The case of the first narrative of creation (Gen. i.-ii. 4a) is somewhat different; from the time when the Babylonian Creation tablets were discovered, it has been recognised that there was a real relationship of some kind between the two accounts of creation, the Hebrew and the Babylonian. At first the new discoveries were appealed to as "confirmation" of the Biblical account, the two being regarded as variants of one primitive tradition; since that time the "light from the East" has grown both in quality and quantity, and the whole subject has been fully discussed from many points of view. A detailed

examination of this account would require several chapters ; all that can be given now is a few notes on the narrative as it is involved in the Babel and Bible controversy. The apologetic side of the question we may dismiss briefly with the remark that if we accept a careful criticism we can dispense with the various allegorical interpretations and harmonistic devices which have in the past grown out of the attempts to reconcile the statements of the chapter with the science and philosophy of different generations. This does not mean that we dismiss the subject simply by saying that the narrative of the creation of the world was not meant to teach science but religion. Let us try to be a little more precise. Besides embodying a noble faith, a faith which must live for ever and express itself in various forms, an intelligent faith in divine action and orderly process, besides this vital thing, the chapter contains ideas which belong to the realm of physical science, ideas which served their purpose nobly for centuries, but which have become childlike in the light of the world's ever-growing knowledge. In other words, we must be prepared to admit frankly that science and philosophy in the Bible, as elsewhere, grows old and takes its place in the history of human thought.

But the main question for us is, What is the relation of this chapter to the Babylonian cosmogony, with which it certainly has points of

contact and yet from which it differs so widely? We have to account both for the similarities and differences, and to answer the pertinent question, Are the similarities strong enough to suggest a real relationship, and if so, what is the nature of that relationship? Various positions have been taken: that the similarities are slight, and are such as might be expected in statements that deal with a common subject; or that the Babylonian and Biblical accounts come from a primitive tradition, which in one case has been perverted into a polytheistic form, while in the other it has retained its monotheistic character. The great body of Old Testament scholars, at the present day, are compelled by clear conviction to follow a quite different course. While there may be difference of opinion as to the time and manner in which this influence travelled into Palestine, they are agreed that the form which the account of the Creation takes in Gen. i. is ultimately dependent on Babylonian modes of thought. It is not necessary to regard this process as a "borrowing," in any crude mechanical sense. The study of the external world in a large scientific sense, and particularly of astronomy, had its home and origin in Babylon; certain forms of thought and expression have persisted down to our own times; can it be at all surprising, then, that the Hebrews, who were a younger race, and who came into a land that had been directly dependent on Babylon,

should feel the influence of this ancient civilisation in matters of science?

We cannot deny the dependence and inferiority of the Hebrews in these matters, but we maintain that it did not destroy the individuality of the Hebrew people or affect seriously the real originality and power of their religion.

The case on the critical side may be summed up briefly as follows: (1) Babylonian civilisation is very ancient, its historic records go back to a period thousands of years before the formation of the Hebrew nation. Long before the particular tribes out of which this nation was formed came into the light of history, there were many migrations of different peoples into Palestine. (2) This light has come to us from the monuments; Hebrew tradition agrees with it, it points to the East as the abode of primitive man, it traces the ancestors of the Hebrew people to that quarter, all its references to Babylon show that the Assyrio-Babylonian Empire is regarded as ancient and original. (3) In this part of the Old Testament (Gen. i.-xi.) there are other sections that bear clear marks of Babylonian influence, *e.g.* the story of the Flood, the Ten Patriarchs, the Tower of Babel. These plain indications help to turn the scale in cases that seem more doubtful. (4) As to the *similarities*, it is contended that these by their very nature show the Hebrew account to be later, and dependent on the earlier

stories. In other words, we have *survivals*, in the form of certain expressions, which are best explained by the supposition that the original meaning has been partly washed out. The idea of "chaos" or the great primeval flood is at home in Babylonia, not in Palestine. The Hebrew word for "deep" has probably some connection with Tiamat, the mythological monster of the Babylonian poem. That the world arises through a division of the primitive waters (Tiamat) is a feature that it has in common with all Babylonian accounts. The phrase, "Let us make man," perhaps owes its presence here to the polytheistic form of the original story. The break in the thought between vers. 2 and 3 suggests that something foreign to Hebrew thought has fallen out. These are but specimens of many details which, taken all together, favour the view that the narrative owes many of its features to an earlier form, which itself has had a long history and passed through many stages. This earlier form may have points of contact with other cosmogonies, but the most powerful influence is, no doubt, Babylonian. When we have admitted all this, we are still face to face with the fact that the chapter that lies before us is a genuine Hebrew production. The Priestly style that marks the present form belongs to the Judaism of exilic and post-exilic times; this is seen in the formal, precise repetition, in the love of classification and

definition, in the blessing of the works of creation, and in the supreme importance attached to the Sabbath. Some of these things may be found centuries earlier in Babylon, but it was in the later literary age that they became dominant among the Jews. But, above all, we have the sublime monotheism to which the Hebrew people had been led by their great teachers ; this colours the whole narrative ; the creative word of God brings order out of chaos and guides the beginning of things in orderly progression. The writer bows in reverence before the mystery of life, and expresses a calm conviction that the world is good. These beginnings of botany and biology have long ago been left behind, but this faith in a living God and an orderly universe belongs to the eternal order of things. In Babylon, sun, moon, and stars were gods ; here they are simply lamps hung in the firmament of heaven for the convenience of man to determine the times of his festivals. The Babylonians had more knowledge of astronomy, and the mythological forms in which this was often presented show a poetic magnificence and weird power ; the Hebrew cosmogony prepared the way for more sober science and purer religion. Taking a large view, we can say this, although in later days by a stupid literalism Genesis and science have often been brought into conflict. Much more might be said along this line, but our present purpose is merely to show

that while the account of the creation is a later production, and is dependent, in a remote way, on the Babylonian cosmogony, yet it is a genuine document of Hebrew faith and Jewish theology ; in its own way it is a strong testimony to the real originality and the unconquerable power of that faith.

With regard to the narrative of the Deluge, after the discussions of the last half century, it is impossible to deny that the case is even stronger for Babylonian influence. The story did not originate in Israel ; it is used by Hebrew writers to fill out their slight sketch of the early history of the world, and to set forth their ideas of God's righteous government. Flood stories are found in many nations, and probably many of these sprang from a common centre ; but those that circulated among the Semitic peoples no doubt originated in Babylonia, the region of great floods, rather than in Palestine, and among the older rather than the younger members of the family. In the Assyrio-Babylonian tradition the story of the Flood is an episode in a long, elaborate poem, —a poem which, with all its wild mythology so foreign to our tastes, is yet full of beauty and impressiveness. The Hebrew account is a mere fragment made up from two different sources, and used in a very simple fashion to piece out a history of primitive times. Whether the original account comes from an actual tradition of a par-

ticular flood, or is a bit of astral mythology, or a mingling of these two, is a matter still under discussion, and one that may never receive an absolutely final answer; but that the account in our Bible is dependent upon an earlier Babylonian record is quite certain. If we are in an apologetic mood we may say that the religious value lies not in that which Babel and Bible have in common, but in that in which they differ, and point out that on the whole we have here a simpler and nobler view of God and His government of the world. But in doing this we do well to beware of exaggeration. We have to concede that in the Hebrew phraseology there is a survival of the older, coarser view (Gen. viii. 21). The view that God judges the world by catastrophes of this kind is not the highest conception; in fact, with our knowledge of the laws of the physical universe, it is difficult to accept it at all (cf. Luke xiii. 3). We cannot infer that people swept away by earthquakes and floods are by that fact proved to have been extraordinarily wicked. We believe in a righteous God who is the ruler and judge of the world, but we are justified in using the teaching of the prophets, and even the lessons of science, to enlarge and purify our conception of God's action. The Hebrew writers, in rejecting polytheism and casting aside much of the ancient Semitic mythology, rendered service both to science and religion; but it is absurd to speak as



if they had all at once reached a perfect theology. Much that they have left us shows, not what we ought to believe, but what thoughtful men guided by the Spirit of God once held, and what we, following a higher revelation, must now leave behind. If we cherish the spirit of our Master and avail ourselves of all new light, we may express our faith in the righteous government of God in a form more suited to our own age.

There seems also to be some connection between the genealogies in Gen. iv. and v. and similar traditions which come from ancient Babylonia. On the fact that the list in chap. v. is more complete, having the full ten members, and more closely resembles the Babylonian table of the primeval kings, Professor Hommel founds an argument for the early date of the Priests' Code; but that argument might just as easily cut the other way, and, at any rate, the date of that document cannot be settled by one or two points of detail, but by its relationship, as a whole, to the life of the Hebrew people. We need to remember constantly that a history of the world and of its own remote past is not one of the first literary achievements of any nation. We have no reason to believe that the Hebrew people were exceptional in this regard; only in later days, when they had a past to look back upon, and when they had come into contact with nations more cultured than themselves, did Hebrew his-

torians attempt to place the history of their own nation within the larger framework of the world's life, and claim for their God the supreme position as Creator and Guide of the whole world. Even then they did not gain the large conceptions of the vastness and duration of the universe which had come to the Babylonians through their astronomical researches. We must concede that from the point of view of scientific education, ancient Israel was provincial and poor; her glory was not to be achieved in that direction, but in bringing to mankind the great prophetic message.

The admissions that we are compelled to make in this respect simply lead to a wider recognition of the truth, that if we would understand the Bible we must accord to it the same treatment that is given to any other great literature, and study the country, time, and circumstances out of which it arose. Dr. A. Jeremias says that in our endeavour to use the light from the ancient monuments we are simply extending the old thought, "If you, the poet, would understand, you must go into the poet's land." In addition to *The Land and the Book*, we have now *The Old Testament in the Light of the Ancient Orient*. When we pass from the Old Testament to the ancient Babylonian records, we find things in a fully developed form which we once regarded as distinctively Hebrew, *e.g.* literary forms, such as the parallelism used in poetic compositions.

Mythology, which is barely alluded to or suggested in the Hebrew Scriptures, flourishes there in full luxuriance. Besides a number of points of contact in details of literary style and social customs, we discover that the conception of "the world" as an ordered universe of a particular type existed long before the Hebrews, and hence was not invented by them. This is clearly proved: there may be sharp controversy on minor points, but the main contention is accepted by men of all shades of thought. But coming into a world of a certain type the Hebrew nation brought its own peculiar contribution, and if these archæological discoveries are multiplied tenfold they can never destroy or belittle the service that Israel has rendered to humanity.

A few words in conclusion as to the result of our examination of this whole subject of Babylon and the Bible. (1) We cannot draw from this sphere alone the solution of critical and historical questions relating to the Old Testament; the experts in Assyriology differ among themselves; some who are supposed to be orthodox, as Hommel and Sayce, have a tendency to make the substance of the Old Testament too much a copy and repetition of Babylonian ideas. In some respects their apologetic seems to us to be quite as dangerous as the more extreme positions of Winckler and Delitzsch. In their efforts to discredit critical views in general and the docu-

mentary theory in particular, these scholars derive so much from Babylon that the very life of the Old Testament is imperilled. The best plan is to take each case on its own merits, not being consumed with zeal for the theories of any school, and, as far as possible, to explain that which is vital in the Old Testament within its own borders, while welcoming light from every quarter. If we can cherish this spirit, then all real light from the Orient will be to us a help and inspiration, not a terror and cause of distress.

(2) This examination of some points of detail leads to the conclusion that was reached by our more general treatment, namely, that, however much Israel might be dependent on Babylon in matters of history and science, religiously she was free and independent—that is, her prophets and leaders had a clear, strong message of their own. Popular religion in Israel as elsewhere was crude, clinging to ancient superstitions and strange survivals; because their history was a living process and religion the essential thing in it, there was continual conflict, ebb and flow, action and reaction; but through it all there is a pathway of light, a real religious movement, that is coming to ever clearer conceptions of God's character and man's duty. When we have once learned to trace the development in and through which this divine revelation is manifested, the less can we regard the religion of Israel as borrowed from

Babylon or elsewhere; we see it in its early simple days meeting new dangers and fighting new temptations, we watch it struggling against the rank growth of native superstition, we behold it under the guidance of prophetic men coming to clearer consciousness of its divine origin and destiny; in the end we recognise that out of local limitations and sectarian narrowness there has come a world-wide message concerning God's righteousness and love which the world will not willingly let die. Babylon in its own place played an important part, its life was not all evil; we read with interest to-day the evidences of earnest noble life contained in its long buried records; there is no need to deny that God was working there in manifold ways; but the Bible still remains as the noblest embodiment of the truth that there is one living and eternal God who speaks to men of prophetic spirit, and through the life of the family and nation reveals Himself more fully to mankind.

## CHAPTER VII.

### EARLY HEBREW RELIGION.

THE subject of the present chapter, "Early Hebrew Religion," is one upon which much time and skill have been spent by scholars in recent years; it is a large, complex subject, which can receive only very slight treatment in the course of a single chapter. All that can be done is to set down a few simple statements, showing how we approach this subject and in what way we attempt to handle it from the modern point of view. What that point of view is cannot be stated in a short sentence, but the meaning of the phrase is quite clear to those who have given even a little careful attention to the matter. Professor James Robertson, in his book on *The Early Religion of Israel*, gives as a sub-title the words, "as set forth by Biblical Writers and by Modern Critical Historians"; and Dr. Orr quite recently has set up the same claim, namely, that there is one consistent Biblical theory as to the nature of Early Hebrew Religion, and that this theory

is the opposite of that which is held and expounded by "modern critical historians." One of these critical historians who has received special attention from the defenders of the so-called "Biblical theory," is the distinguished German scholar who passed away not long ago, after a life of arduous and fruitful toil, Dr. Bernhard Stade. While we cannot help admiring the courage and energy with which Dr. Robertson set himself to stem the tide of criticism, and while we enjoy his flowing rhetoric, including the smart raps given to individual critics for their blindness and folly, on the whole, we find more help in Stade's positive presentation of the subject than in all these clever attempts to magnify the difficulties of the critical position. Dr. Stade was, in his own way, as little complimentary, for he tells us that what the Scotch professor gave to his readers was simply a caricature of the critical theory. Thus the conflict seems to go on unceasingly; but more and more the new books are written from the new position, and we are glad that so many stimulating and suggestive volumes are now appearing in the English language. While there is a certain general scheme accepted by the dominant school, the Higher Criticism cannot claim "to have settled all things"; for in the place of one question that has been answered many new ones have come to the

front ; but, fortunately for the sake of clearness, these are specific questions of detail upon which scholars will need to spend much time and labour. With regard to many of these it may be impossible to reach an absolutely final and convincing answer ; and yet we cannot say that the labour thus spent is wasted. As an example of such a question, we may mention the discussions as to the origin and primitive meaning of the word "Yahweh," the name given by the Hebrews to their national God ; these discussions have been full of interest to the student, but there is still room for great variety of opinion.

By "early" Hebrew religion we mean that religion before it came under the influence of the great prophets of the eighth century B.C. We know fairly well the character of Judaism ; its documents and institutions come within the clear light of history ; we can disentangle the leading ideas of the prophets even from the scanty remains of their great sermons. But the nature of the early religion is still a subject of fierce discussion. There is no need to regret these discussions, light will come out of them as well as smoke ; and the keenness of the controversy is a testimony to the importance as well as the difficulty of the subject. It will always be very difficult to reconstruct anything like a living picture of a generation that lies



about three thousand years behind us, and that belongs to a different country and race. We have in this region, then, to be content with a few positive, suggestive thoughts.

This is a historical subject, and we only begin the history of the religion where we begin the history of the people, that is, when they came into Palestine. Here again we are brought face to face with the fact which we have had to insist upon so often in this book, namely, that we must form our view of the age and character of the documents before we can come to a conclusion as to the nature and course of the religious development. We may have held firmly and intelligently to the belief that this religion comes from God, in a special manner, but our view as to the time of its origin and the way in which it grew may have been considerably modified by further study. To settle the date of a document, then, while only a means to an end, is an important means to a very important end. For instance, if Ps. xl. and li. come from the same period and the same people as the story told in 2 Sam. xxi., then anything is possible in a psychological and literary sense, and there is an end to all definite criticism. Since any real piece of literature reflects the life of the times from which it springs, and since there is a real onward and upward movement in any living

nation, we must study the age of documents as a means of getting at the actual life.

From the view already taken of the documents, we cannot begin the history of the religion in the supposed time of Abraham, or, in other words, the patriarchal stories of Genesis cannot be used as material for pre-Mosaic history. "The primary value of these stories is didactic and religious rather than historical" (Professor Kent, *Biblical World*, Dec. 1906). This does not mean that an absolutely new beginning is made at the Exodus, and that behind that there is a "*tabula rasa*," or blank. The view we now take gives us much more before the Exodus than the older view; instead of the story of one small family, we have the migrations and toils of many tribes, who were struggling towards clearer religious convictions and higher political unity. But what this life was we cannot learn very clearly from the narratives of Genesis; we must discover it from the general history and life of the Semitic nations, and from the traces which it has left in the later history of Israel. So far as the Israelites are concerned, we are compelled to regard the period before their entrance into Palestine as prehistoric. Doubtless there was an Egyptian servitude of some tribes, and desert-wandering of many tribes; but while we gain some light from other sources, it is difficult to draw any consistent

picture of those distant days from the Hebrew documents.

Neither can we accept one of the latest views, that of Winckler, that we must begin the history in the time of the early monarchy, and that David was practically the founder and first apostle of the Yahweh-religion. While the historical remains are scanty and the traditions in some points varying and uncertain, we believe that the story of the Hebrew people and its religion can be traced back to the time of Moses. This is the position taken by a great many scholars who are thoroughly radical in their criticism, and it seems to be the view that will in the long run prevail. There does not seem to be any chance of restoring the traditional view of the pre-Mosaic period; but criticism tends more and more to become positive and constructive, and seeks to trace with growing clearness and certainty the movement of Hebrew religion from the days of Moses, its founder, to the times when its noblest aims and aspirations were fulfilled in Jesus, the Christ.

In the book already referred to by Professor James Robertson, we meet this question, "Seeing that the Hebrew tradition, at the very earliest point at which we can seize it, is purer and loftier than any other, why should it be at all incredible that in that race from pre-Abrahamic times and in the lands from which

the faith of Abraham was disseminated, there were found purer conceptions of God and deeper intuitions into His character and operations than we find elsewhere—glimmerings of a purer faith which had elsewhere become obscured by polytheistic notions and practices?" (Robertson, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 487). What shall we say to this elaborate question, except that it is a pure speculation, resting on the antiquated idea of a "primitive revelation," and that it gives us vague generalities which have little contact with actual history.

We begin, then, with the character of Moses, and try to form some definite idea as to the character of the new Hebrew religion. It is surely an ancient tradition, "a Biblical view," that Moses was in a very real sense the founder of this religion. There was a time when it seemed as if Moses was going to be lost in the floods of criticism; but that time has gone by, and now, though we cannot regard this great leader as the author of the Pentateuch, he still stands before us as a great creative spirit, heroic and glorious in his wonderful work. "A historical picture is not complete which finds no place for Moses" (Stade, *Geschichte*, etc., i. 516). What Moses did was to revive the hopes of these scattered tribes, and nerve them for heroic efforts in conquering the new country which was to be their future home and the scene of such important

events. This he did by preaching to them the power of Yahveh, and thus providing for them an inspiring faith and a living bond of union which was both political and religious. So the nation and the religion were born at the same hour, and through the same divine call and the same creative act of faith; the nation did not fully realise its unity all at once, this was only reached through the long struggles and varied circumstances of succeeding centuries; the religion also required those same centuries of toilsome life in which to show its real purity and power.

The religious beliefs held and the rites practised by the Israelites before they came into Palestine were, no doubt, very similar to those which prevailed among other Semitic tribes in the nomadic state. The position held by the foremost representatives of Old Testament criticism is, we believe, the correct one, namely, that if we wish to form a picture of Israel's ancestors, we must compare them with the Arabs of the desert rather than with the priests and scribes who dwelt in the great cities of Babylonia and Assyria. If they were not "savages," neither were they specialists in theology and astronomy; they were strong, courageous men, thoughtful in their own way, but simple in their modes of thinking and living. Traces of their beliefs and customs may be found in many of the things which in later days were transformed or cast

away. The Israelites could not, and did not, suddenly drop old beliefs and sacred customs, and pass at one bound into a new theology and a larger life. The faith of Moses was, no doubt, higher than that of the ordinary Israelite, but it was not incomprehensible to them; men of eager hope and strong desire could grasp it and live upon it. It was a new religion, but it had its points of contact with the old life, and could appear as the continuation of much that was inspiring in their more ancient modes of faith. Whether the name Yahweh came from the Kenites or from some other source, it now gained richer meaning and became a living bond of union for many tribes, drawing them together and fitting them for tasks that were immediately before them. The first task was not to write books or codify laws, but to gain a home in which they might build a strong nation and worship their God. Thus for the leaders of the nation this crisis was a *conversion*, a turning to their God who had revealed Himself powerfully in their experience, and proved His power to save His people when they trusted Him. Yahweh might speak in the thunder, but He was not a mere force of nature; He might dwell on Sinai, but His power was not limited to that sacred mountain. All the traditions show that there was an element of choice in the relation between this people and their God; it was not a simple

affair of nature or ancestry; and they all testify to a new, keener sense of reverence. This point of view must have been intensified by the presentations of later writers, but it was there from the beginning, and it was so real that it was never completely crushed. There was room for real development during a thousand years of restless life, but when we have reduced it to its simplest form there was something in the new movement, this birth-hour of a nation and a religion, that had in it the promise and potency of a rich expanding life. The power of Yahweh was a power manifested in history, and a power that quickened in His subjects a sense of moral obligation. Here we find the central significance of the Mosaic movement, and in this work we see that Moses was a prophet who brought to the people a message which he received from God. Here, as elsewhere in the Old Testament, the new view lays stress upon the inspiration of men rather than upon the mechanical dictation of dogmas.

When we come to speak of the religion of a people, we must remember that there are many strands which we can distinguish but not separate. We speak of "popular" and "prophetic" religion, but we must not at first make too deep a gulf between these two forms of religious life; there are different grades of prophets and different classes of people. The prophets could not have done effective work and have left a permanent

message unless there had been many disciples who understood their words and were in full sympathy with their purposes. The mass of the people, however, not only clung to their own old customs, but were easily led to add to these others of a somewhat similar character from their Canaanite neighbours; hence the difficulty of forming a complete or consistent picture of the religious life of those days, when such varied forces were struggling for the mastery. It is now easy enough to prove that the elaborate ritual of the Priestly Code did not exist and could not have been practised in the wilderness. It is easy enough also to declare that the early religion was more natural, sensuous, picturesque, and joyful, less literary, ecclesiastical, and dogmatic than it became in later Judaism. But these generalities, true enough in their way, do not carry us very far. Ritual of some kind there must have been round the desert sanctuaries, in connection with the travelling tent and at the various centres of worship in Palestine. Religion was an affair of the family, the clan, and the tribe, as well as of the nation, and in these early days there must have been much liberty and diversity; loyalty to Yahweh, the national God, did not at once and for ever depose the household gods, crush out local customs and tribal usages, or produce anything like religious uniformity. One of the first things that used to trouble the



youthful student of the Old Testament, as soon as he began to try to put things together for himself, was the immense difference between the elaborate order of the ritual prescriptions of the Pentateuch and the state of things revealed in the books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings. It was evident that if all this legislation existed in the earliest days, it was very much of a dead letter. Everywhere we find endless variety and exuberant irregularity. You can account for this on the supposition that the Bible history is like a police record, which passes over the lives of orderly people in silence, and gives an account only of notable law-breakers and disturbers of the peace. Such an explanation is somewhat strained, and it certainly impoverishes the narratives; if the most striking incidents narrated in this wonderful literature are not typical of the actual life of the people, but give us only the morbid and exceptional, then we have no real revelation of that human life through which the grace and guidance of God are richly manifested. The contrary is surely the case; the literature, limited as it is, reflects the varied life of the people and the real growth of the religion. The days of "the Judges" were rude, unsettled times, full of these so-called abnormal incidents. The period of the first Kings was an age when, after several imperfect attempts, a fuller measure of national unity and religious centralisation was reached. As we

watch these varying struggles, we feel that we are face to face with a real creative movement and not merely with the carrying out of a programme that had been fully formulated and embodied in a written constitution.

The worship of Yahweh is a historical movement and a national religion, it is larger and nobler than the ritual customs of family or clan; it is the bond of union and the source of life; hence it is bound up with every great change, and rises to its highest power in the supreme crises of the nation's history. The religious philosophy which pervades the framework of the Book of Judges may be somewhat mechanical, with its regular rhythm of apostasy, punishment, repentance, and deliverance; but certainly there is this truth lying behind it, that in early religion, politics and religion are closely connected, and every movement towards closer union and purer life partakes of the nature of a religious revival. In a real revival the religion goes back and nourishes itself on sacred memories, but it also presses forward and gains a clearer vision. Among such movements and revivals we may class the coming into Canaan, the great battle celebrated in the Song of Deborah, the struggles of Saul against the Philistines, David's great achievement in making Jerusalem the capital of the nation and the centre of the religion, Elijah's heroic opposition to the worship of the Tyrian Baal,

and so on through more than a thousand years of eventful life. Through all this ebb and flow, this action and reaction, a people is formed and a religion advances in strength and purity. The Hebrew peasants were not systematic theologians, their leaders had not yet turned to study universal history and to claim the whole world for Yahweh; in their family life and tribal action they were encompassed about by old religious customs, survivals of beliefs that were ancient and in some respects outworn; but when there was a call for general effort, when the fiery cross went round, when the whole nation was moved by a common hope or fear, then they knew that Yahweh was going forth in their midst, and they awaited with eager expectation some mighty manifestation of His power.

This new religious force, by its very purity and vigour, led to continual conflicts, and it was by these conflicts that the content of the theology was enriched. In one sense we must admit that this religion never completely conquered its own people. The northern and larger half of the nation was broken and destroyed in the process, and only through Jewish channels have we received some precious fragments from its literature and life. It has been maintained with much force that not until the Exile did the Yahweh-religion gain a decisive victory in Judah. Just when the prophets had risen to their loftiest

heights and proclaimed the noblest views of God, the people were again caught by foreign religious fashions and enticed into coarse idolatries. This we can read clearly in the words of competent witnesses, men like Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who knew the nature of their religion and the weaknesses of their people. But in the early formative period the direct influence of Egypt and Assyria did not play a great part. The real struggle was with the Canaanite culture and superstition; and here is the supreme witness to the original energy and permanent power of the Yahweh-religion, that it was not crushed or absorbed, but emerged victorious and enriched from this struggle. The people were at times corrupted by that which was worst in the Palestinian religions; but their leaders, the real saints, spoiled the enemy in the noblest sense, and claimed that the fruits of the land, the wheat and barley, the vine and fig-tree, were not the gifts of any local Baal, but the gracious blessings of Yahweh, their God. It was this enlarged faith that inspired the noble Nature-Psalms of a later literary age; to this is due in part the thought of God ever present in the world of nature, which is so graphically presented in other parts of the Old Testament, and which should still have a prominent place in our preaching.

What account, then, does the Old Testament itself give of these early struggles and great

achievements? If we accept the modern analysis of the Pentateuch and turn for our answer to the early historical narratives, we shall find that there is not a complete ritual dominating and shaping the life of the whole people. Still, if there were no canonical, verbally-inspired books, there were eager, energetic men facing life with true reverence, stern resolution, and keen intelligence. These men were deeply religious in their own way, they sought to apply their knowledge of God to the problems of practical life. Such men, though standing on a different plane of civilisation and refinement from that which we ought to occupy, are well worthy of the name chosen by Professor Budde, who speaks of them as "Champions of Yahweh."

There were also heroic men, fighters in the literal sense; men who brooded over the nation's wrongs and sorrows until the spirit of Yahweh came upon them with irresistible energy, and they arose to seize the most convenient weapon and to do the work that was nearest to their hand. In this kind of inspiration, this wild enthusiasm, they believed thoroughly; Yahweh was the God of the nation; to do His bidding, to conquer His foes, was both patriotic and religious, it was the highest act of worship. To expect these men to appear before us as conventional Christian saints is absurd. The virtue of noble tolerance, the gift of gentle courtesy, is something that we,

with all our advantages, have not fully reached. They had rough work to do, and often they did it in a rough fashion. At times we may be tempted to feel ashamed of those rude fellows, but most of those to whom we are indebted were strong, clear-headed, true-hearted men, who placed their brawny arms and active brains at the service of their God and their tribe. Without their loyal, chivalrous devotion to the name and worship of Yahweh, their tiny nation would have been blotted out and its services lost to humanity. Time would fail us to tell the story of Gideon and Jephthah, David or Barak, but it is a tale worth telling, and a tale that needs to be translated into modern life. In the politics of our time we need more intelligent, heroic zeal for God, that is, for truth and righteousness. The Hebrew, when the lines had fallen unto him in pleasant places and he had a goodly heritage, did not altogether forget that by God's grace this was due to strong, courageous men of the past who had fought a good fight.

We must also acknowledge the services of the puritans and conservatives, of the men who practised total abstinence and preached "the simple life." These men were to some extent old-fashioned, and the thing that they fought for so strenuously was only a part of the truth. Memories of the stern life of the wilderness lingered in the minds of these men, and their

religion was of the simple, severe kind suited to the desert. They saw clearly the disadvantages of city life, and they were not prepared to sing the praises of civilisation. They saw many a youthful Samson lose his strength and fail of his vocation through wine or false companionship. Mere abstinence and protest cannot save a nation ; the city is here, and it must be made clean ; the land is here, and its produce should be used in the highest service of God and man. True, but the fact remains that the ancient puritans and conservatives did render real service to the life of the nation and to the religion of Yahweh. It may be that the highest ideal is not the simple life in any formal sense, but simplicity of spirit that uses *things* rightly and maintains a fine balance and symmetry. Yet we have cause to thank God for Elijah, John the Baptist, and lesser men of the same breed ; men who exalt bare manhood as against mere things ; men who protest against worship of mere furniture, and show us that the living man can cherish a noble independence. Certainly these stern, traditional, dogmatic men, with their unbending opposition to new ways, acted as a bulwark against the tide of Canaanite luxury and licentiousness. They fought with sword and spear, and bore down men who had been weakened by impure living ; but they fought also against those subtle influences which are most perilous in the hour of prosperity. They

had their lonely vigils, stern resolves, and powerful prayers ; the spirit of Yahweh working mightily in them made them determined that the good things of the past should not be lost. Such puritanism and conservatism, separating itself and claiming a perfection of its own, may, in quiet times, become very narrow and barren, but in days of strife, as a factor in the nation's life by the side of other forces, it may be powerful for good, and it forms part of God's manifold message.

There were prophets and priests in those days, but it is difficult to give a full and exact description of their activity. The probability is that they did not differ so much as in later times. The priest being bound to a particular sanctuary and belonging to a hereditary caste, became more easily the creature of custom than the prophet. The lowest kind of prophet might be a vagrant, living by his wits and possessing little of that real wisdom that comes from above. The true prophet was always a thinker, a seeker after God, a believer in visions and voices, an idealist, a poet. As the human spirit always retains some measure of its original freedom and refuses to acknowledge the finality of classes and labels, sometimes the priest was also a prophet, and the prophet might fall into ritualistic, conventional ruts. From the better class of these men have come to us ancient stories which have passed through many forms and played many parts ;



stories in which the old and the new mingle strangely, and in which we can clearly mark the upward movement of the human spirit in its search after truth.

Some of our sober conservative scholars are anxious to exalt as highly as possible the character of the earliest prophets; they appear to think it impossible that God can have used, in helping forward a great movement, people who in any way resembled "dervishes" or "ranters." Sitting quietly in the study and trying to arrange history on certain lines of refinement and respectability, that attitude of mind may be quite natural. And yet we profess to believe the statement of the Apostle Paul, that we have first "the natural" and then "the spiritual"; and in our own time we have the object-lesson of the Salvation Army beginning its career with a considerable amount of "ranting," and yet living to become an economic force as well as a real religious influence. There is no need to be surprised that in early Israel, among a people much more given to violent expression of emotion than ourselves, there were enthusiasts, men in whom religious feeling and patriotic passion produced an excitement that seemed akin to madness. The roving bands of enthusiastic worshippers of Yahweh in their missionary tours sought to kindle the fire of piety and fan the flame of patriotism. Such revivals, often running to wildness and excess, did

on the whole serve a good purpose ; and whatever disadvantages they may have had, they are the marks, on one side, of a living religion which owes its revival not merely to quiet meditation, but to the passionate longing and eager hopes of the common people. The great prophets are not merely emotionalists, they have risen to a loftier height of reason and morality, but still they show traces of their relation to their more violent and ecstatic brethren.

Speaking of the statement that Saul was caught by the contagion of this enthusiasm and carried away by the whirl of excitement, Professor Budde writes on this subject in a scientific style, but at the same time in a sympathetic spirit, as the following passage may show. "Of the demeanour of the prophets of this period we get a sufficiently clear conception from this story, and many another narrative of even much later origin presents the same picture. More than once, prophet and madman are synonymous. If we would picture them to ourselves, we need only think of the dervishes of the Mohammedan world or the flagellants and similar enthusiasts in mediæval Christianity. The comparison extends further than the outward demeanour. For just as the flagellants were the promoters of a profound movement of penitence, by which it was hoped the fearful judgment of the plague might be averted, and as the dervishes seek to rally the

forces and determination of the Mohammedan world against the mighty strides of Christianity, and have actually turned their aspiration into accomplished fact to the extent of forming kingdoms; so the ecstasy of the prophet bands in Samuel's time was no mere symptom, no mere religious exercise which recedes into itself. The prophets also, as well as dervishes and flagellants, must have pursued a religio-national aim. We can conceive no other than the shaking off of the Philistine yoke by means of the purer and more zealous worship of Yahweh. And that which the circumstances of the time suggest is confirmed in fullest degree by the deeds of the single prominent personality within their circle, the neophyte Saul. For, when the prophetic spirit seizes him for the second time, his wrath compels his reluctant countrymen to hasten to Jabesh-Gilead to the help of their brethren, and he overcomes the insolent Ammonites. From this the raising of Saul to the kingship and the war with the Philistines follow as a matter of course; no one expects anything else of him. During the critical struggle we find in him the scrupulously devout servant of Yahweh, anxiously watching that nothing be neglected which may make sure of His favour. The off-repeated consultation of the oracle of Yahweh; the fasting of all the warriors until the victory is won; the dread of Yahweh's displeasure as the hungry people seize the cattle of the enemy

and slaughter without ritual observances; the grim determination with which he ascertains through the oracle the guilt of his son Jonathan and is resolved upon his death; and, lastly, the gloomy 'redemption' effected by the people, no doubt by the substitution of another victim,—all these are cumulative proofs of the view here presented" (Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*, p. 97).

This is quite different from the old dogmatic treatment of Hebrew history and literature, but even those who are opposed to it have to admit that it makes our study of it more fresh and living; when thus carefully examined and sympathetically interpreted, the facts give us a real revelation of human experience, and enable us to form some helpful pictures of religious life in those ancient days, with all its turbulence, confusion, and changefulness. The conclusion, then, that we draw is that early Hebrew religion was in its outward circumstances much like that of the other Semitic tribes of those days, and that it became different and nobler through the influence of God-inspired men who, because of their clearer vision, were able to lead their fellow-men into higher thought and life. We still meet in the records reminders of many things that we in our day are compelled to regard as rude and superstitious, but we see men with their faces towards the light, and in their tragic struggles there is a

promise of better things. We see a nation in the making, and a religion coming to clearness and power. The Hebrew people have much in common with nations of similar ancestry, and they owe much to the past; but they have their own independent life, their religion also possesses that kind of originality that belongs to the highest efforts of human genius and the greatest gifts of God. It has to be viewed, not in scattered details, but as a large growing movement; then it appears as one of the most interesting chapters in human history as well as a true revelation of divine guidance and blessing.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### STRUGGLES AND SURVIVALS.

THE critical study of ancient Hebrew life tends to make the idea of "revelation" less abstract and dogmatic, more real and living. We no longer think that a perfect theology was imparted to men at the creation of the world or at the beginning of Hebrew history. By treating the Bible as any great literature ought to be treated, according to fair and honest principles of interpretation we come to a fuller recognition of its unique character and wonderful power. By investigating the history of the Hebrew people according to the same rules of evidence which we apply in every other sphere, we gain a clearer impression of the God-given mission of a people who from the worldly point of view appeared insignificant. Stade, referring to the fact that the Exodus was from the standpoint of the Egyptians an insignificant event, makes the appropriate and suggestive statement that "the Divine walks on the earth everywhere in the form of a servant" (Stade, *Biblische Theologie des*

A. T. p. 30). And this statement applies to the whole of this remarkable history; we are only beginning to understand its full significance. And the more we leave abstract theories of revelation, and study the actual circumstances in and through which the religion grew, the richer and more real does this significance become. If our present purpose were apologetic, we could quote many witnesses on this point. In a book to which we shall need to refer again, a book written to show how much of the Primitive Semitic Religion still exists in Palestine to-day, we read these strong sincere words: "While it seems to me that we find abundant evidences of development in the Old Testament, from very simple concrete representations of God to those which are profoundly spiritual, I am not able to account for this development on naturalistic principles. In it I see God . . . all times and everywhere co-working with human instruments until the fulness of times should come. The messages which we find in the Old Testament seem all the more divine to me because of the great gulf which is fixed between primitive Semitic conceptions of God and the noble, spiritual views of Him set forth under divine illumination by an Isaiah. The great prophet is a product of many ages of divine revelation and teaching, and cannot be accounted for as a natural representative of his age and people" (Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-day*, p. 14).

That statement is profoundly true, although there is also a sense in which Isaiah was a natural representative of that which was highest and best in the life of his people, while being through God's grace the creator of something that was still higher and better. Similar are the words which one of the ablest writers on the subject of Hebrew religion uses with regard to Moses and his work ; he says, " In the case of Moses it is the peculiar character of the new ideas promulgated by him that forbids us to derive these from his own reflexions or to ascribe them to shrewd calculations for selfish ends. Upon the foundation laid by him there has arisen in the course of three thousand years the building which includes also the Christian nations. But the laying of a foundation like this is beyond a man's power ; the capacity must have been given him by God. And on this very account the importance of the personality of Moses can hardly be exaggerated. Such is the conviction of the Deuteronomistic author of Deut. xxxiv. 10 when he remarks : ' There hath not arisen a prophet since in Israel like unto Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face ' " (Kautzsch, art. Hastings' *Bible Dict.* v. 625). We may accept this statement fully and yet acknowledge that, though a religion can be founded only once and its founder must have a unique spiritual gift, yet the foundation would have been in vain unless God had given wise master-builders in the



succeeding ages. A frank and full acceptance of the fact that the religion itself passed through a real development enables us to measure the significance of each man's work; and at the same time shows us that it was not a natural product of the soil in any shallow, materialistic sense. When we pass from the pure lofty teaching of our Lord and such great expounders of Christian truth as Paul and John into the Old Testament, we feel as if we had gone from a brilliantly lighted room into a darkened chamber; but if we try a different process, namely, to read a fair impartial account of ancient Canaanite religion and then turn to even the earlier and cruder parts of the Hebrew history, we find that the light is clear and strong compared with the dense darkness of the world outside. But that is no reason why we should think of Moses, Amos, Isaiah, and other pioneers as perfect theologians of the Anglican, Presbyterian, or any other modern type. All through this book there has been with me the twofold conviction that there is something creative, that is, divine, in the movement of Hebrew history and the growth of Israelitish religion; and that this divine element is most clearly seen when we, as a result of a critical examination of the documents, watch this distinctive faith fighting its way through all kinds of hindering circumstances and natural entanglements.

Dr. Robertson Smith states the case very clearly in the following words: "Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are *positive* religions, that is, they did not grow up like the systems of ancient heathenism, under the action of unconscious forces operating silently from age to age, but trace their origin to the teaching of great religious innovators, who spoke as the organs of a divine revelation, and deliberately departed from the traditions of the past. Behind these positive religions lies the old unconscious religious tradition, the body of religious usage and belief which cannot be traced to the influence of individual minds, and was not propagated on individual authority, but formed a part of that inheritance from the past into which successive generations of the Semitic race grew up as it were instinctively, taking it as a matter of course that they should believe and act as their fathers had done before them. The positive Semitic religions had to establish themselves on ground already occupied by these older beliefs and usages; they had to displace what they could not assimilate, and whether they rejected or absorbed the elements of the older religion, they had at every point to reckon with them and take up a definite attitude towards them. No positive religion that has moved men has been able to start with a *tabula rasa*, and express itself as if religion were beginning for the first time; in form, if not in substance, the new system must be in contact

all along the line with the older ideas and practices which it finds in possession. A new scheme of faith can find a hearing only by appealing to religious instincts and susceptibilities that already exist in its audience, and it cannot reach these without taking account of the traditional forms in which all religious feeling is embodied, and without speaking a language which men accustomed to these old forms can understand. Thus to comprehend a system of positive religion thoroughly, to understand it in its historical origin and form as well as in its abstract principles, we must know the traditional religion that preceded it" (W. Robertson Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*, pp. 1, 2).

Of course, we cannot expect preachers and expositors of the Old Testament to be specialists in this modern study of comparative religion; for in these days the man who is "a specialist," in any strict sense, must give his most strenuous labour to a very narrow field; but it is helpful to the interpreter to know something of the background that lies behind both the life and literature of this people. Besides the apologetic side, to which reference has already been made, there are two other advantages in this study of survivals. In leading us to understand the life of the past, it gives us power to criticise in a sympathetic spirit the life of our own time. In the dogmas of the Church and in the religious life of the people there are still modes of thought and customs that

survive from the distant past, relics of what we call paganism. Some of these things may be harmful, calling for courageous opposition; others may be forms of backwardness that need to be dealt with gently; while others may be simply antiquarian relics, poetic and picturesque. Such a thing as Mormonism is not only "out of date," that is, a grotesque survival or revival from primitive times basing itself on a crude idea of revelation; it is from its very nature a menace to society. The belief held by some "rangers" of our day, that to have a good time in the spiritual sense, "to be filled with the Spirit," one must be thrown into an abnormal hysterical condition, is a survival of something that was common in early Semitic religion, but in the light of the highest prophetic life it is seen to be childish. Pre-Christian customs and usages that cling to Christmas and New Year festivals may be of slight importance now from the point of view of religion, but they show us the tenacity of old rites and the transforming power of a new living faith. The study of "origins" may be handled so as to become a small antiquarian fad, a piece of helpless dilettanteism; at least, we are sometimes warned to that effect. But surely there should be little danger of this in the case of the earnest, thoughtful preacher who finds "primitive man" in the life of many people around him, and at times in his own heart. In

this case it is the results and not the processes that must come into the pulpit; and if those results are given in a wise manner they will surely make for edification as well as instruction. It is not only interesting to the people, it is good for them in the highest spiritual sense, to learn that our loftiest thoughts of God and religion did not drop ready-made from the sky, but grew by painful process in which the guidance of God has been beautifully blended with the life of man.

When we come to details of this kind, we shall find that it is possible to have differences of opinion on many points among those who hold similar views as to the age and nature of the documents. Even where the fact of development, in the fullest sense, is not grudgingly conceded but freely welcomed, it is not possible to have agreement as to the exact nature and course of such development. The records are scanty, the questions are delicate and perplexing; here as elsewhere it is difficult to compress all the facts of life into a narrow scheme or formula.

The question of Totemism in its relation to the life of the Hebrew people is one that has provoked considerable discussion without leading to anything like unanimity. Fortunately it is not of direct and immediate importance to the expositor, though it is well for each student to try to form an opinion of his own with regard to it. It may be that Professor Kautzsch has

dismissed the argument in favour of Totemism in a somewhat summary fashion, but it is scarcely wise for the young preacher, full of zeal for modern methods, to compare the early Hebrews to savage Indians with totem-poles, when a scholar of such high standing can say deliberately that "upon the whole we must conclude once more that, while it is certainly possible that Totemism once prevailed in Israel, its prevalence cannot be proved; and, above all, we must hold that the religion of Israel as it presents itself in the Old Testament has not retained the very slightest recollection of such a state of things" (article in Hastings' *D.B.* v. 613). Professor Marti, an able scholar and keen critic, is equally strong on the same side; he says, "Totemism is not yet proved for the ancestors of the Israelites" (Marti, *Geschichte des Israelitischen Religion*, p. 24). Stade, on the other hand, seems to find remains of totemism in some of the clan names. Robertson Smith, who examined the matter thoroughly, tells us that "at the stage which even the rudest Semitic peoples had reached when they first become known to us, it would be absurd to expect to find examples of totemism pure and simple. What we may expect to find is the fragmentary survival of totem ideas, in the shape of special associations between certain kinds of animals on the one hand, and certain tribes or religious communities and their gods on the other

hand. And of evidence of this kind there is, we shall see, no lack in Semitic antiquity" (*The Religion of the Semites*, p. 425). If this is as far as we can go, such statements as the following from a recent text-book are apt to be misleading: "That Totemism was common in early Israel, and that it played a large part in the social life of the time, seems probable." "That Israel was emerging from a totemistic stage of social life at the time of the settlement is probable; though how long the people were in ridding themselves of its thralldom it is impossible to say" (Day, *Social Life of the Hebrews*, p. 94). Of course, "probable" is a somewhat elastic word, but here it seems to be stronger than the evidence warrants. It can scarcely be claimed that totemism has left clear and numerous marks on Old Testament literature. On the classic passage, Ezek. viii. 9, it is said that "we have a clear case of the re-emergence into the light of day of a cult of the most primitive totem type, which had been banished for centuries from public religion, but must have been kept alive in obscure circles of private or local superstition, and sprang up again on the ruins of the national faith, like some noxious weed in the courts of a deserted temple" (W. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 338). If it had been banished for centuries from public worship it must have been prehistoric so far as the Hebrew people were

concerned; what we call, in the proper sense, the Hebrew religion is far above this primitive stage when we first meet it. We know that this purer religion had to fight not only against Canaanite Baalism and Babylonian star-worship, but also against magical superstitions that contained in themselves relics of ancient barbarism.

With regard to Ancestor Worship there is a similar diversity of opinion. To some scholars the theory that the worship of ancestors once prevailed among the Israelites seems to be the best explanation of certain facts, such as the mourning customs, the sacred pillars placed on graves (Gen. xxxv. 8, 20), the name "elohim" given to the dead, the sacrificial family or clan feast (1 Sam. xx. 29). But here again each step of the proof is contested, and each fact is shown to be susceptible of a different interpretation. Here again we have to conclude that, if ever this practice was living and prevalent among the Hebrews, it was so long ago that it has been forgotten by those who wrote the documents which have come down to us. "If Ancestor Worship ever prevailed in the pre-Mosaic period, —and it is psychologically quite conceivable that respect for the dead bodies and the tombs of parents inspired at least tendencies to a kind of Ancestor Worship, —no consciousness of this survived to historical times, and the whole question, as was remarked before, has at best



an interest from the point of view of Archæology but not of Biblical Theology" (Kautzsch, Hastings' *D.B.* v. 615).

It is generally held now that the pre-Mosaic beliefs of the Hebrew people are largely coloured by "Animism" or "Polydemonism." There are some who would like to show that a regular development can be traced from Animism to Ancestor Worship, from this to Polytheism, and then on to Monotheism. It is not our business to discuss whether this form of development has been carried out elsewhere; confining ourselves to the history of Israel, we must admit that it is difficult to compress the facts into any such scheme. The ministry of living, God-inspired men broke in upon what we would call the "natural order," and produced a continual conflict between the old and the new; the new thought could not reveal its character at once; it must have its development; what the nature of the battle was and what its great results were, we must be willing to learn from actual history and not from any abstract scheme of evolution. In later days the poet can utter in sublime language the thought that God is everywhere (Ps. cxxxix. 8, 9), but it is not in that form that the truth first comes to men. Particular gods or spiritual beings are connected with particular places; many sanctuaries are found near sacred trees and fountains where gods or spirits had originally manifested them-

selves. In our records we see that these sanctuaries are claimed as places where Yahweh, the one God of Israel, had appeared to the patriarchs and heroes of the past, but it is not difficult to see the original meaning shining through the later interpretation. In still later times, prophets and reformers denounced these sanctuaries and the corrupt worship that had now gathered round them. Mingled with keen terror, and the disorders produced by ignorance and fear, there was much poetry and some real piety in those recognitions of spiritual beings and in the worship of natural forces. These old beliefs and customs still linger on in the land that gave them birth; there is a certain deep truth in the phrase, "the unchanging East"; it is a region where men cling with great tenacity to ancient modes of thought and time-honoured usages. But what we are face to face with in the Old Testament is the growth of a living religion which shines out clearly against this Semitic background and advances steadily towards the perfect day. Even if we admit that local and tribal elements to the last cling to the Hebrew idea of God, these are virtually transcended in the teaching of the great spiritual leaders. In the earlier days the beliefs of the most enlightened men were limited and simple, and among the more ignorant people the demonology to which we find in the Old Testament only scant reference was luxuriant

and influential. The law and the prophets conspired to transform or cast away customs that could not be reconciled with pure faith in the ~~one~~ living God.

Without entering into the nature or wisdom of what is called in these days "psychical research," one can surely maintain that, connected with much of the modern spiritualism and the pursuit of the "occult," there is a mixture of trickery and superstition that is not creditable to human nature. One can understand that kind of thing three thousand years ago when "science" was almost unknown, and when the gods and demons that had been so real were still struggling for their lives; but we can also admire men like Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, whose faith in a great intelligent God was so real that they could speak with fiery scorn of those who were driven by superstitious fears or spiritual hunger to all kinds of magic and false spiritualism. This strong, honest word comes to us across the ages. "And when they shall say unto you, Seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto the wizards that chirp and mutter: should not a people seek unto their God? on behalf of the living *should they seek* unto the dead?" (Isa. viii. 19). This was the faith of men who found God in the light, and did not need to seek Him in the darkness. Those who preserved these interesting but fragmentary records for us have purified the literature, and have, as

far as possible, banished evil and inferior spirits ; the few survivals on the written page only faintly represent the popular superstitions that prevailed and filled men's lives with morbid terror and foreboding gloom.

The question of human sacrifice is a point that raises many difficult questions. The sacrifice of human beings does not belong to "Hebrew religion" in the sense in which that phrase is used in this book, that is, it was never a part of the genuine worship of Yahweh. But it was practised by Israel's neighbours, and therefore probably by the tribes from which Israel sprang in the prehistoric times. An old law in Israel commanded that the male firstborn must be given to Yahweh ; but this was probably interpreted by the law that provided for the redemption of the firstborn. Such sacrifices in Israel were exceptional. We find them as a consequence of a rash vow in the case of Jephthah, and probably in the case of Saul also. In later times, when, through national calamity, the people lost faith in their God and failed to keep pace with the movement of their teachers, we have a pretty extensive outbreak of these evil practices. But we find the real leaders of Israel's religion always strongly opposed to this ancient custom. One of the noblest stories of all those that cluster round the name of Abraham shows that Yahweh does not really desire or demand such sacrifice ; it is

definitely rejected in one of the finest passages in prophetic literature (Micah vi.). Jeremiah and Ezekiel, who had to face the disorders of a time when the nation was shaken and almost destroyed, declaim against it as a cruel superstition in which Yahweh can have no delight. The sacrifice of children to the gods had been widespread from ancient times, but from very early times the real representatives of Hebrew religion seem to have seen that it was not consistent with the character of their God. It must have been a lofty thought of God expressing itself in prophecy and law that was able to disown and shake off a custom that had such a strong hold in those religions, and that tended to revive so easily in every time of darkness and danger.

This is clear as far as child-sacrifice is concerned; but if we use the word sacrifice in a loose sense and apply it to the slaughter of enemies and the execution of criminals, then we may have to admit that it was at one time consistent with Hebrew religion. Is it a sacrifice when Samuel hews Agag in pieces before Yahweh, or when David causes the seven sons of Saul to be hung up before Yahweh? Different answers are given to this question. Certainly these actions had a religious tone, for in those days religion was not a thing apart, it ruled in all spheres; but we can scarcely call these sacrifices in the strictest sense. And yet it is difficult to draw the line, as there is

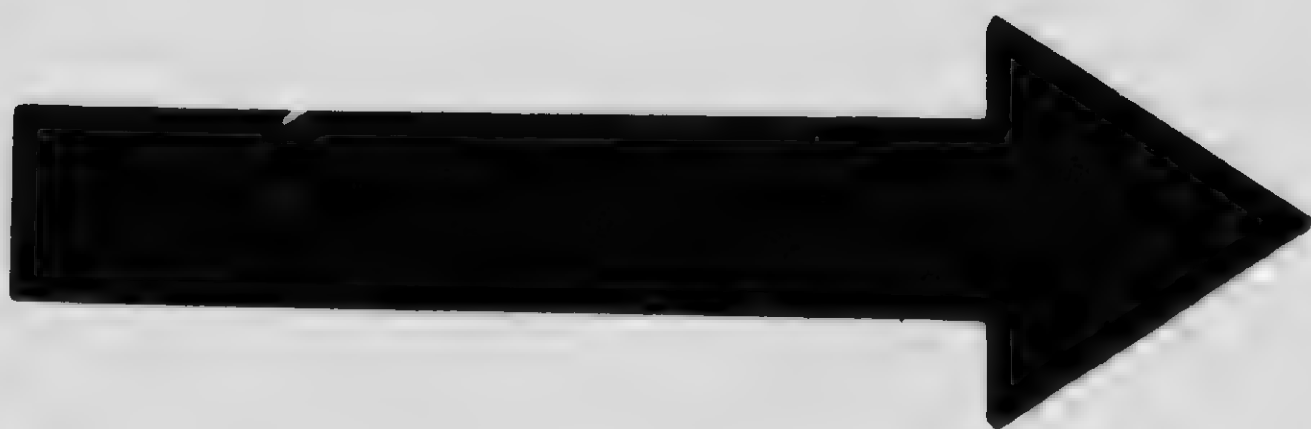
in such cases not merely the idea of punishment to the sufferer, but also the thought of expiation, of making things right with a God who is jealous as well as just.

From this we easily pass to the consideration of the *herem* or ban. In modern times we have been told that "war is hell," and certainly it was not a mild, kid-glove performance in ancient days. We show our progress by killing more men in a given time, and, at the same time, we try to make the game as civilised and gentlemanly as possible. The ban was originally a war custom, and consisted in "devoting" the enemy and all his belongings to destruction (Num. xxi. 2; Josh. vi. 17; 1 Sam. xv. 3). This was an ancient Semitic idea, and in Israel this kind of homage was paid to and demanded for Yahweh as the war-god, the leader and deliverer of His people. If we do not class this also under the head of sacrifice, we must say with Kautzsch, that "the religious element is found in the complete surrender of any profit from the victory; and this renunciation is an expression of gratitude for the fact that the war-god has delivered the enemy, who is His enemy also, and all his substance into the hands of the conqueror." The earliest practice seems to have required the destruction of all property and every living creature in the conquered city; but afterwards it was modified and made milder. It is quite clear that it was not

easy to soften cruel customs when they were so thoroughly steeped in religious motives, and to the last there remained in the old religion too much of the feeling that a man should love his kinsfolk and hate those who were different in blood and religion. Too often this survives with us in actual life, though in creed we profess to have passed far beyond it.

It is impossible in a brief survey to deal with such subjects as slavery, polygamy, blood revenge, and other forms of ancient Semitic life that have been transformed and purified by the power of a living, growing religion. All these things and many others quite as repulsive to us could be proved and supported from the Bible if it is treated in a crude, mechanical fashion; in fact, the historical method applied intelligently and reverently is the only thing that can save us from a gross abuse of Scripture which has been too common in the past. We must find the line of the higher movement, then we can distinguish the real evolution from the stubborn but outworn survivals; then we can see the guiding hand of our God and hear what the Spirit saith unto the Churches. When we stand in the presence of the Lord Jesus, we hear Him declaring that many of the old things must pass away in order to give place to a fuller knowledge of God and a larger charity towards man.

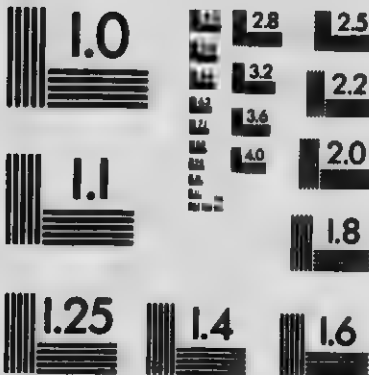
With a brief reference to the more distinctly





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theological side of this question we must close. Very persistent in the Old Testament is the idea of the association of calamity and sin. We find it in the story of the Flood, it lies behind the interpretation of nature in the story of the famine in the days of David. The writer of the seventy-third Psalm wrestles with it, it furnishes the theme for the mighty struggles in the Book of Job, and receives its condemnation in the wonderful Poem of the Suffering Servant. Yet it survives, and in the days of our Lord men have to be reminded that those upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell were not proved by that to be greater sinners than their fellow-men. And still the old idea survives and is a part of our popular belief, in dark hours it is almost an instinctive feeling, and at times it is preached from Christian pulpits. The idea would not survive if it were false through and through; there are truths connected with it, and it is the duty of the expositors to find the truth and translate it into modern forms, forms consistent with our latest science as well as with our noblest piety.

Another region in which the growth was slow was the rise of a pure hope of immortality among the Hebrew people. Within the canonical writings we have only the first beginnings of such a doctrine and the first gleams of this mighty hope; and then only in the latest part. In other religions, as those of Egypt and Babylon, there

were scholarly speculations, popular fancies and ancient superstitions concerning the world of the dead. But here again an intelligent treatment of the documents shows us that these things were not carried over into Hebrew religion in any mechanical fashion. It is now seen that Egyptian theology exercised practically no influence on early Hebrew religion. That religion in its earliest stage was most concerned with the practical problems of the present life. Among the people of Canaan and among the Hebrews after they settled in the country, views of a dark underworld of the dead similar to those held in Babylonia and other lands no doubt prevailed. This was a fertile field cultivated by magicians and spiritualists of many kinds. The Hebrew religion, or, if we like to use a wider term, Old Testament literature, did not create this particular world of ideas, it was the growth of previous centuries. Considering that the record covers a thousand years, we do not read very much about demonology and necromancy, but there are indications that it is there as a dark background and as a subtle foe of the new faith. From what is known of the life of Babylon and the Palestinian tribes, we can fill up the lack and amplify the hints. We do not find in early Israel any formal creed as to the future life. But over against this dark background there begins to emerge in later days the hope of personal immortality. To us it

may appear strange that there ever was a time when it seemed a sufficient programme that a man should serve God and his country to a good old age and then be peacefully gathered to his fathers, or that in early days Yahweh's sovereignty was not fully realised as extending into that unknown world. We cannot fall back to that condition without spiritual loss, but it was possible for saints with simpler theological ideas to cherish a lofty ideal. If in later times the Hebrew development was, in this particular, influenced from outside, it was because they had by their own growth reached a stage when they could face such speculations with intelligence and sympathy. We cannot now discuss that in detail, our point is simply that, in so far as the thought of personal immortality was reached by Hebrew thinkers, it was not a matter of speculation in the merely intellectual sense, there was logic in it, in a deep sense it was the conclusion drawn by the believer from his lofty faith in God, a faith that had taken centuries to reach maturity. Men came to feel that Yahweh was not merely the God of history who cared for the corporate life of the nation, but that there was a personal, spiritual bond which might resist even the terrible strain of death: "Whom have I in heaven but Thee, and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee," was one of the mightiest words of Hebrew faith.

## CHAPTER IX

### HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

THE question before us is one that will seem to many people to be quite superfluous at this time of day, and in the present connection: it is this, Is it possible, according to the evidence presented by existing documents, to prove that there is such a thing as genuine historical development in the religion of the Hebrew people? Still, it may not be an altogether useless exercise to try to make our ideas a little clearer as to what we mean by "historical development," and as to what can be regarded as proper proofs and illustrations of the same. Of course, in some measure there has always been a recognition of the facts of development or progress; whenever men have come to the stage where historical material was accumulated and were in a position to reflect upon their past, they have gained a glimpse, even if dim, of the upward movement of humanity. They may have differed in regard to the question whether the world was growing better or worse, but they saw clearly that there was in many spheres a

movement from lower to higher, from simpler to more complex, from natural to spiritual. The writers of the Old Testament recognise this, and it is stated clearly by St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Thus, while the idea of "evolution" is in one sense very modern, it is, in another, exceedingly ancient; the thought has gained a wider range, a deeper meaning, and a wonderful variety of illustration.

When we come to discuss this point in connection with Old Testament literature, the question as to the dates of particular documents is seen to be of very great importance. Just here the charge is frequently made that we are for ever reasoning in a circle; we exhibit late ideas from a late document, but we also prove that a document is late from the nature of the ideas that it expresses; thus the reasoning of the critics is vicious and confusing. If this were so, and there is some truth in the statement, everything would be in a condition of uncertainty, and criticism would be a hopeless business. There are, however, some fixed points, some books which we know to be late, and other books or parts of books which are admitted to be early, and these are sufficient for our present modest purpose. Those of us who are in sympathy with the modern movement believe that, after much uncertainty and through many complex investigations, certain broad lines of development in

regard to political history, religious thought and Church institutions have been worked out with a fair measure of clearness, and that these can now be used as a standard in dealing with doubtful cases. We confess that these are delicate operations, and that the investigator needs to be on his guard against his own particular bias.

There is no need to remind intelligent people that this is not a simple matter; it cannot be represented by a straight line starting at one point and ending at another; in fact, when we are dealing with life all mathematical symbols and similes fail us; there are not only ups and downs, actions and reactions, circling movements and forward struggles, there are also all kinds of issues and detailed developments that surround and complicate the general situation.

Further, there should be little need to protest against the charge that in laying emphasis upon such development we are giving way to "naturalistic theory" and falling into sceptical modes of thought. Those who make this charge are not able to give us any clear and consistent statement as to the relation of the natural and the supernatural. Any one who cares to examine Dr. Orr's book may find that he has a rationalism of his own while he regards the rationalism of other people as dangerous and irreverent. That attitude of mind is probably one of the peculiar

dangers of theological study. In any case we must believe in development; even if we attach great importance to special interpositions in the great crises of the world's history, we must still believe that God is working through the constant activities of nature and human life. The worst kind of scepticism would be a theory that tended to limit divine action to sudden mysterious movements. Development in a large sense means a progressive movement beyond the control of individuals or parties; it is the very process that implies God; it means order and purpose, in other words, the thought and action of the great God who is behind all things.

The fact of development in itself does not tell us anything as to the nature of the particular stage involved; the fact that one thing follows another and depends upon that other does not determine its character as higher or lower; that must be separately investigated, each thing must be permitted to speak for itself. When we say that there must be poetry first before you can have rules of poetry, or that the spontaneous creative movement comes before criticism, you do not by that statement imply that the critical analysis is higher than the creative act, but you do maintain that there is a development in this sense, that one process had to arise before the other could come into existence; and when the first had once gained full play, the second, in the



regular course of things, was sure to arise. In other words, we can show that between things and thoughts there exists a logical, reasonable, or necessary connection; every one of these connections, infinitely varied as they are, speaks of intelligence behind the events, and of purpose in the history. Surely, then, it is very strange that some who claim to have a monopoly of orthodoxy should regard this process as a thing that has in itself a sceptical bias, instead of being, in the hands of reverent men, a tracing of God's action in human life.

We will consider different ways of looking at this subject; let us take first Dr. Robertson's statement: "But now, if the knowledge of God in a pure form is to be placed so far back in history, and made to start with a simple revelation to Abraham, what becomes of development? Well, in the first place, the modern theory also has to postulate a starting-point; and, we have seen, its difficulty is marked when it seeks to place the absolute commencement of a spiritual religion at a late period. But, in the second place, the Biblical theory is more conspicuously a theory of development than the modern one. It makes the advance of the religious idea really an unfolding of a germinal conception, not an advance from one attribute to another, as from might to holiness, but an expansion of one fundamental conception into wider references

and application. And it is a development marked by historical stadia. From the Being who made Himself known to the soul of Abraham, and from that time onward was the covenant God of one nation, faithful to His word, even though His people should be unfaithful on their part, we can trace an unbroken development to the God of all the families of mankind. For if He defends His own people from their enemies, and is at the same time a merciful God to His own, the idea follows, and we see it early, that His enemies, by submitting to Him and casting in their lot with His people, will share in His people's blessings, and thus the God of Israel will become, in fact as well as of right, the God of all. Strictly speaking, the Old Testament writers never got beyond the idea of national religion. Though they perceived that Jahaveh ruled all nations, and acted on strictly moral and just principles towards all, they never conceived that there was no difference between His relation to Israel and His relation to the nations. In point of fact there was a difference, as history has proved" (Robertson, *The Early Religion of Israel*, p. 480).

For our purpose it is not necessary to quote the whole paragraph, or to discuss in what sense Christianity is a development or expansion of the older faith. At the beginning of the next paragraph we are told, "Thus from Abraham

on to the close of national independence there was a regular and steady development, the idea of Jahaveh and the conception of what His religion implied undergoing a steady expansion in the prophetic teaching, aided by the political events through which the nation passed" (*ibid.* pp. 481-82). If we substitute Moses for Abraham, the last sentence will serve very well for a brief definition of the modern view, but turning back to the fuller statement just quoted we must make a few brief comments. (1) It is scarcely fair or wise to oppose "the Biblical theory" to the modern view, for as a matter of fact there are various theories in the Bible; and the modern view may be stated in such a way that it is seen to be a fuller, richer conception of the ancient idea of development which is found in simpler form in the Hebrew documents. (2) The difficulty of beginning with Abraham is an historical one; we cannot fix his period with any certainty or definiteness; the form in which the traditions that circle round him have come down to us reflects the ideas of a later time. Now that we can no longer start with the creation of the world, we cannot make an absolute beginning anywhere; the most "simple revelation" must connect itself in some way with what has gone before; we would like to go farther back, but a careful study of the documents compels us to yield to

Moses the position of founder of the Hebrew religion. (3) The modern idea of development, as we conceive it, is misrepresented in this paragraph; it is not a mere advance from one attribute to another, it is a varied and complex story of the passage of many truths from a lower to a higher stage. Take as an illustration the thought referred to in this passage, that Yahweh's "enemies by submitting to Him and casting in their lot with His people, will share in His people's blessings." This may be an old tribal belief, meaning that if you will have the blessing of a particular god you must by certain rites join the tribe by which he is worshipped; or it may be a lofty prophetic thought, as in Isa. ii. 1-5, where men are drawn to the national sanctuary because it is the abode of righteousness and a centre of pure spiritual influence; or it may even be a bit of modern sectarianism on the lips of those who claim an ecclesiastical monopoly of God's infinite grace. (4) When we are told that, "strictly speaking, the Old Testament writers never got beyond the idea of national religion," we have a statement that may be misleading if it is taken too literally. In many places the prophets lay down principles that are universal in their range and significance; there is a noble inconsistency in the Old Testament, and it is just this that gives it its prophetic character. If you try to magnify the beginnings

of Hebrew religion and minimise its final achievements, you are not in full sympathy with the modern view of historical development.

Dr. Orr, one of the most persistent critics of the critical movement, tells us that "Revelation must begin somewhere and must work patiently according to the law of historical development; must lay hold on what is better to counterwork and gradually overcome what is worse; must be content to implant principles and bear patiently with much remaining evil, till the good has time to grow, and to give rise to an order of things that will supplant the old. This is the true side of the law of evolution; and it applies in grace as well as in nature" (*Problem of the O.T.* p. 472). One cannot help admiring the wonderful facility with which this scholar seizes the true side of everything, placing himself firmly at the absolutely correct position while every one else is floundering in the mire. He is not satisfied with Duhm's statement, that we are driven to accept "the necessity of providential guidance in the actual stages of the development of the religion." This is not high enough; it does not admit sufficient of the "supernatural." When Gunkel says, "The history of revelation transacts itself among men according to the same psychological laws as every other human event," Dr. Orr objects (*Problem of the O.T.* p. 21) that here revela-

tion is held to be compatible with an abundance of error and illusion, and hence this word ought not to be used; but when he comes to deal in detail with the subject, he has to admit substantially the same thing, only he is very much concerned to show that "revelation" is not responsible for human error and weakness. Instead of historical development, this apologist gives us "progressive revelation"; he speaks of this progressive revelation as if it were a person with whom he is on intimate terms and with whose conduct he is quite familiar. Thus (1) *it must take a man up at the stage at which it finds him*; (2) *it can be responsible only for the new element which it introduces*; (3) *it has an educational function which can only reach its end by working with such means as the imperfect state affords towards the production of a more perfect*. Dr. Orr, of course, has a perfect right to use this abstract style if he prefers it, and to create these categories in which to arrange the well-known facts, but in doing so he has to admit that "historical development" is a true conception, which we must try to understand. "An illustration of the principle in question is found in the command to Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. In so far as this command supposes as its background the heathen custom of the sacrifice of children, it falls under the two former principles, the revela-

tion takes up a man at the stage at which it finds him, and is not responsible for the basis on which it works; but in so far as it uses this basis to elicit a singular proof of Abraham's faith and actually to put the stamp of divine condemnation on human sacrifice in Israel, it falls under the third, or educative principle. For even in this most hateful form of heathen sacrifice, as has often been pointed out, there was a robler element present" (*ibid.* p. 474). As a peculiar result, then, of this analysis, we are brought to the conclusion that revelation did not create the noble element involved, the idea of surrendering the best to God; man could reach that himself, even a heathen man, but revelation must come in to conserve and clarify it. This shows how difficult it is to split such complex things with our rude axe and separate the human and divine. On Dr. Orr's whole treatment of this subject we have to say (1) it is criticism of its kind, that is, it is an analysis of the story and explanation of it. It seems to proceed upon the supposition that we are dealing with a literal history "of real men" and of God's revelations and dealings with them. Thus we have Professor Orr's way of rationalising the story or making it intelligible and reasonable to us. Notwithstanding the tone in which such explanation is given, it is well to remember that as Protestants we have no infallible authority

for settling such matters; any authority possessed by such an explanation must come from its inherent reasonableness. (2) If we are compelled to believe that the story in its present form belongs to a time centuries later than that of Abraham, and that in those later days, when child sacrifice was a real danger to Israel, noble men were inspired to use such stories in preaching against that form of sacrifice, we have another explanation as reasonable, as reverent, and as consistent with real revelation as the one before us. (3) What is more to the point now, when we wish to avoid theology and confine ourselves as closely as possible to history, we can see clearly that, whatever our views may be on great questions of criticism, we have to acknowledge that in the religion of the Hebrew people there was a real growth from a lower and simpler to a higher and richer life. For ourselves we prefer to use both phrases, to speak of "historical development" and "progressive revelation," in that way we manifest our faith that the life of God and man is inextricably blended in the whole great movement.

Dr. Orr shows that he has not a very full and joyful faith in historical development, by the fact that he finds it most objectionable that any one, and particularly any one whom he can class as a "believing critic," should attempt to prove that



a document is late because it contains "late ideas." But surely the nature of the ideas in a document is one of the clues to its character and date. This line of argument no doubt needs great knowledge and care for its proper exercise, but if there is such a thing as historical development it is a fair and valid kind of argument. If, for example, we found the spiritual teaching of Jeremiah and the strong individualism of Ezekiel in a document without a date, we should never think of attributing it to the age and circle from which proceed the stories of the punishment of Achan and the hanging up of Saul's seven sons before Yahweh. When we have once taken the trouble to work our way into the heart of this great movement we shall find that the form in which the ideas or truths are presented is a very important guide as to the age and position of any piece of literature.

When we turn to books that are written frankly from the standpoint of development, the atmosphere is quite different. Todd's *Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel* contains many statements which at first may be "shocking" to those who have been accustomed to think about religion only on conventional lines, but if it is read with strength and openness of mind its treatment of the history will be seen to be reverent and sympathetic, as well as stimulating. We are tempted to quote two brief passages; the

first is a warning to those who are seeking to use the historical method. "In seeking to recover for ourselves some approximation to the religion at this early date, whether of the peoples of the Mediterranean coast in general or of those of the Levant in particular, we must at once dismiss from our minds Christianity and other world-religions which avowedly rest on a reasoned and moral basis. Equally must we get rid of the official and organised pantheons of Greece and Rome, Egypt and Babylon, since they are the religious counterparts of a complicated political system. Nor will the later Judaism, worshipping the Righteous Creator, help us, since it is the result of a long and strange spiritual education.

"But we must guard with even greater care against supposing that primitive religion bore any great resemblance to the horrid cults of actual savages or of decadent peoples, based on calculated cruelty and obscenity.

"We shall expect to find the religion analogous to the other sides of life—simple, joyous, confident, buoyant; crude if you will, certainly not more tender or modest than social life generally; but above all expansive, and already containing in itself the *seeds* of the worships of Jupiter Optimus, Maximus, Pallas Athene, Jehovah, and even of the Almighty Father of the Christian creed" (*Politics and Religion*, etc. pp. 35-36). Again, speaking of the strange primitive use of an

important word "Kodesh," "holy," he says, "The strangest use of this root is its application to the harlots who lived in cottages within the sacred enclosure. These were not loose women whose presence was winked at; they were part of the regular establishment, sacred to the god, kodesh. A vast amount of virtuous horror has been expended on this 'frightful' and 'debasing' institution; all of which might very well have been spared. The prostitutes of our Christian streets will afford us ample food for moral reflection, without worrying about these Syrian girls of three thousand years ago, when sex relations were understood quite differently. The simple fact is that primitive man understood worship as 'rejoicing before his god,' and accordingly enjoyed himself in his own way in the temple courts, with abundance of roast meat and wine, and the society of one of the women of the shrine. If our idea of 'joy in the Lord' is something very different, it is because we stand at the end and he at the beginning of a vast education and development. 'That was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual.'" (*ibid.* p. 41).

Just two brief remarks on this paragraph: (1) With regard to the particular institution here mentioned, it belonged to Canaanite, not Hebrew religion; the Hebrews had their own forms of imperfection and coarseness, but as wanderers

and warriors from the desert their life was in this respect simple and severe; the luxuriousness and licentiousness of the Canaanites became a temptation to them after they had gained possession of the land. Thus we see that the situation is complicated; many things that did not belong to the original forms of Hebrew life have to be taken into account, as they constitute the things against which this religion had to fight, and through which it grew to maturity and attained its final richness and strength of character. (2) The preacher who is to expound this literature and make it interesting to his people must accept the principles of development in this full and hearty fashion; only thus can he find a deeper significance in stories which are on the surface extremely repulsive.

That which perplexes us in the writings of some "conservative" theologians is the fact that, while in words they acknowledge development in religion or progress in revelation, they fight so strenuously for a lofty Hebrew theology in the time of Abraham, and in some cases contend that in the light of recent discoveries they are convinced that the Patriarch could quite well have imported a noble monotheism from Babylonia. This monotheism is sometimes supposed to be the remains of a "primitive religion." But surely in the light of the scientific knowledge of to-day we must regard this as the survival of old

tradition or scholastic speculation which has now lost its meaning. No doubt God was ever present with men in prehistoric times, never leaving Himself without a witness in the great outside world and in the deep recesses of the soul ; still the revelations with which we have to deal are not questions of abstract speculation but matters of history ; such revelations concerning God's righteousness and man's duty we can trace in Israel with increasing clearness from the time of Moses onward, and of the pathway of this revelation we may say that it shines brighter and brighter unto the perfect day.

In a certain sense it is difficult to prove this ; if, for example, a man says that he cannot see any great difference between the two accounts of creation, and that he cannot see why they might not proceed from the same man and the same age, then you have a situation that argument cannot very well cope with. It is a question of sight, not merely of fancy, and here as elsewhere what a man sees depends upon what he is prepared to see ; in this case the preparation involves working out for ourselves the course of the history from a careful study of the documents. Again, if a man says that he cannot see why David could not have written Ps. li. and cxxxix., you are compelled to reply as politely as possible that if he did write them any one can write anything. It is not a mere matter as to

what David might think or write ; we know from the historical books what he thought and how he acted. The question is, can it be said to be a psychological possibility that he should at the same time cherish the spiritual, universal thoughts that we find in these noble poems? In a large complicated empire and in an advanced state of civilisation, a great variety of religious circles and theological ideas may exist side by side, but Israel was comparatively small, and its different classes of people were near to each other in social conditions and spiritual sympathies. In the earlier days the leaders are not far removed from the people ; it is in the later days when the religion is reaching its fullest height that a great gulf is created between popular and prophetic religion.

To illustrate what is meant by historical development, many monographs are necessary, and these cannot be attempted even in outline at the close of a chapter ; these may now be found in several languages, and the varied lines have been traced over with great patience and skill. Now it is sufficient to say that these signs of development are found in all parts of the Old Testament, and touch all subjects from the least unto the greatest. Take the matter of chronology ; while that in itself may not be a small thing, relatively or from the religious point of view it is often counted a small thing. It seems prob-

able that the early stories now enshrined in the different documents circulated at first in a separate form without any historical framework. Then in the prophetic and historical books we find simple chronological notes, such as "two years before the earthquake," "in the year that King Uzziah died"; but without further information it would be very difficult for us to fit these events into the general history of the world. In later times a scheme is compiled which goes back to the beginning of the world, and knows the name of the first man and the length of time that he lived upon the earth. This chronological scheme has now completely crumbled away in the light of scientific knowledge; but in its day it served a real purpose, and satisfied intellectual needs which are now more fully provided for. If we apply to Israel at all the idea of development, we must admit that these intellectual needs, this demand for a complete chronological scheme, did not arise at the very beginning of the nation's life when the Hebrews were fighting their way into a new home. The conception that we are now compelled to form of Moses and his work shows that he must have been busy with practical problems of a different nature, so that we cannot think of him as spending his time in the wilderness piecing together bits of historical science gathered from various quarters.

If we turn now to the greatest thing of all, the idea of God, we can only hint at the rich development that is involved in the teachings of historians and prophets. To lay stress upon the fact that Israel's idea of God was to the last a national one, and at the same time to try to exalt the idea possessed by Abraham or Moses, may be an ingenious way of disparaging development, but it does not render full justice to the situation. Moses may have had a comparatively simple, noble, and powerful idea of Yahweh, the God in whose name he preached and worked. If, for example, we could imagine that the theology of Ps. cxxxix. was possible to Moses and his time, we would have to admit that the Hebrew religion reached the loftiest heights of universality and spirituality at the beginning of its career; the evidence, however, all points the other way. At the beginning, Yahweh dwells at Sinai, there is the centre of His presence and power; later, He becomes the God of Palestine, or at least of that part of it occupied by His people, and in course of time gains a sanctuary at Jerusalem; this city, through various influences, national and religious, becomes the dwelling-place of the Great King, thus attaining an ideal position and an everlasting name. At one time Sheol, the dark underworld, seems to be beyond His province, but through the faith of saints and the revelations of the Guiding Spirit a bright



hope is inspired that even there His people are not beyond His love and care. That, however, is one of the latest and noblest results; it does not seem to play a very clear, definite part in the early religion. By the work of the great prophets the thought of God is enlarged and purified; the moral principles ascribed to Yahweh show that He is not a small tribal god, but the righteous ruler of the great world, who demands purity of heart and cleanness of life as the highest form of worship and the only acceptable service. This is not the God of a sect or party, but of the whole world; for it is the highest man can conceive, and it appeals to the seeking souls of all times and places. When a student of prophecy gathers this up for us in a condensed form, we have a practical creed suitable for any nation and appropriate to any age: "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. vi. 8). In other writers, as in Deuteronomy and Deutero-Isaiah, this moral teaching, which implies a universal God, becomes transformed into a rich theology, scornful of all small idolatries, and claiming with conscious faith the great world for Israel's God. Here there is a definite creed and a certain amount of controversy, but it is alive with passionate feeling, glows with poetic fervour. The God of Israel

is finally recognised as Creator and Ruler of the whole world; the doctrine of election receives its full significance; He who is the Lord of all peoples has chosen this people to be His own in a special sense, and through them He will act upon the life of all other peoples. Thus the way is prepared for Him who was to come and declare the truth that God is spirit, and that in every place the true seekers may find Him and worship Him.

The same kind of development may be shown in relation to a great many lines of thought, *e.g.*, The Idea of Immortality, The Missionary Idea, The Idea of Vicarious Suffering; and, while in many cases an earlier and a lower view still linger side by side, the higher view always becomes clearer and stronger. But before the separate stage can be traced in any subject, the age and character of the documents must be settled; and while we admit that this is often difficult, we are compelled to attempt it because it is of supreme importance.

To trace the development along these various lines is to the reverent man a spiritual as well as an intellectual exercise; he feels that he is moving along the path through which the great pioneers were guided by God into fuller and clearer knowledge of Himself. The great truths by which the religious life is quickened and nourished become all the more real and powerful as we see how

they were wrought into the very fibre of the world's highest life, how they came to us not by way of direct dogmatic statement, but through the lives of men like ourselves who found God in their own experience and in the great world of which we form a part. And surely it is an essential part of the equipment of the modern preacher to learn to read this ancient literature in an intelligent, sympathetic manner; not for the purpose of giving mere lectures in history or of finding historical illustrations for his sermons, but now and then to re-create for his people the life of the distant past, and show them how in all ages the noblest, most earnest men and women have wrestled with the problems of the world not merely for the sake of getting a living, but to find life in the fullest sense,—in other words, to find God, that they might know Him whom to know is life eternal.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DOCUMENTARY THEORY.

THE most important contribution that Old Testament criticism has given to the world is no doubt "The Documentary Theory," or, in other words, the theory that the Pentateuch is not the product of one writer or of one generation, but consists of four different documents, which had their origin in different ages and circumstances. This is now pretty generally regarded as one of the "assured results" of scientific research, though now and then some scholar comes forward to remind us in solemn tones that the use of this phrase proves that we are uncritical dogmatists. We need not argue this point at present, as it would simply re-open the whole question ; and just here we may be allowed to say that it is not possible to re-state the whole case every time any particular subject of Old Testament study is discussed. But one thing is certain, even this, that it does not need any great keenness, when reading a book on Old

Testament Criticism, to detect how the writer's sympathies stand in regard to this central theme. The scholars who accept the modern view on this point may be ranged on one side, and those who ignore or reject it on the other side. Thus we are justified in saying that this solution or supposed solution of the Pentateuchal problem is a question of fundamental importance and far-reaching significance. If we cannot without challenge speak in this connection about "assured results," we can, at all events, speak of accepted results, and point to the fact that this analysis is either assumed or defended in the leading dictionaries, commentaries, and text-books which are now available for students in this department. We do not mention this fact to silence discussion or to overawe dissentients. We have no desire to see any "result" exalted into a dogma which is received on authority: that mode of procedure is quite alien to a really critical or scientific spirit. We maintain that for the thoughtful student of the Old Testament it will always be helpful and inspiring, not only to study the reasons why this particular theory is so widely held, but also to trace in a sympathetic spirit the history of the movement, and to see how slow and painful has been the process through which even this amount of certainty and definite conviction has been reached. At present, then, all that we insist upon is the tremendous importance of this view

of the so-called Mosaic documents; if the dominant school is right in this analysis, it is at this point where it has gained its most important victories; and if wrong, it is here where a perverse ingenuity has succeeded in luring towards a false track the scholarship of several generations. This latter alternative leaves us in a hopeless mood; if after centuries of toil the leading men of different countries and Churches have succeeded merely in building up a fanciful and futile hypothesis, we are tempted to believe that such a thing as scientific literary criticism is impossible. This belief would surely be out of harmony with our faith in the presence and guidance of the Eternal God; a faith which, while it leads us to regard our individual contribution with humility and diffidence, makes us certain that there is a divine revelation in all great progressive human movements. However, we cannot settle this matter from any general principles that we hold in regard to the nature of criticism; we may by our own personal temperament be inclined to think either that the traditions hallowed by great age are safe and sacred, or that the men of to-day, with their larger opportunities, have a much better chance of coming to correct conclusions on matters of history and literature. But each case must be taken on its merits; ignorance and bitterness on the one side or the other will not carry us very far. "It is remarkable how inexact

and indiscriminating is the knowledge of the critical position displayed frequently by those who come forward to oppose it; and how largely even the more prominent of its recent opponents appear to rely upon rhetorical depreciation and invective. It is difficult to understand what force such weapons can be supposed to possess. No serious issue has ever been decided by their aid; and the present one, it is certain, will form no exception to the rule" (Driver's *Introduction*, p. 17). This statement by a sober investigator we may all accept in principle, though we are apt to fall into a different temper in the heat of controversy. Our best course, then, in this short discussion is to state briefly what is meant by the theory in question, to show how it came to its present significance for the student of the Hebrew Scriptures.

The view now generally held is that the contents of the first five books of the Bible cannot possibly be the work of one man or one generation of men; that in them we have represented different kinds of literature, various stages of history, and diverse types of theology, prophecy, and law. Strange as it may seem at first, it becomes clearer the more the matter is looked into, that the first chapter of the Bible is, in its present form, one of the latest parts of this wonderful collection, and that in order to gain a scientific view of the growth and advancement of Hebrew religious thought and life, the material

must be arranged in a form quite different from that which we find in our ordinary Bible. This process of analysis or re-arrangement does seem to be destructive and capricious to those who have not taken the trouble to work out the questions with some degree of thoughtfulness and patience. The critics are charged with turning things upside down or setting things upon their heads, while on their part they retort that only by this critical re-arrangement is it possible to see any real order of development. Certainly there is one thing that we must admit, namely, that on the supposition that these five books came from one writer or one short period, there is no such thing as historical development; neither can we say that there is "progressive revelation," because we have here, in a brief compass, a great many different stages of civilisation and forms of life.<sup>1</sup> The difference between the first two chapters of Genesis is very great when once we see it clearly. Sometimes even within the space of a single chapter we may have pieces belonging to various ages and situations. If we wish to find parallels to different parts of the Pentateuch, we must seek them in books belonging to widely different periods; Deuteronomy has affinities with Deutero-Isaiah and Jeremiah; the Priestly Code with Ezekiel and Chronicles. In other words, the position as to these five books is the same as

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter IX.



that of other parts of the Old Testament, we have here compressed together documents that reflect the thought and life of several centuries.

The long, slow movement through which the scholarship of more than a century has reached this conclusion has in itself many lessons for those who are prepared to treat it sympathetically, and the result of this varied cumulative toil holds, as we have said, a special position in the general body of Old Testament criticism. This theory began as a contribution to the problem of the structure and origin of the book of Genesis, from this it spread to other parts of the Pentateuch, and, finally, it was applied to most of the other historical books. It did not gain its present position without a fierce, long-sustained struggle. There have been conflicting forms of the theory, but now we can look back and see that in each form there was an element of truth. The man who first suggested the clue to this analysis, by noting that different documents used a different name for God, was moved by an apologetic impulse; he wished to show that Moses in compiling the book of Genesis used different memoirs, which can be separated and tabulated. But it was only slowly that scholars realised the far-reaching significance of this suggestion. The question of authorship had to fall into the background in order that continuous study and supreme attention might be given to this problem of the structure and origin

of the books. That has been debated in this form for more than a century; as we read the history of this struggle, there is much that seems confused and contradictory, but after a while order emerges out of the apparent chaos. Reviewing discussions from the vantage ground of our present knowledge, we can see that in a great movement as well as in the thought of an individual man there is, in attacking a problem, a strategic point to be conquered; there is one side of the case that demands clear recognition as a condition of progress. Thus we may say that it was absolutely necessary in the first place to acknowledge clearly and definitely that there are different documents, different strata of historical material, such as J, E, P, D. It could not be allowed that the books were simply a collection of disjointed fragments, or that there was one great document with numerous shreds of supplements. The general lines of what we call "the documentary theory" had to be laid down broad and strong; that which was the main idea in it had to be strictly maintained as against opposing theories. Now we are in a position to do fuller justice to the competing theories, to recognise the truth that was in them, and to tone down the sharp outlines of the original statement. Thus J, E, D, P are not merely individual writers, they are schools of literature and periods of history. At last it seems that scientific research will succeed in

arranging the varied pieces of literature embraced in the Old Testament into a series of movements extending over well-nigh a thousand years. There are many fragments and also many duplicates and supplements; thus we can see that the "Fragment Theory" and the "Supplement Theory" were not vain imaginations; they had a basis in fact; but *the fact* that had first to be recognised and thoroughly understood was the fact of different strata of documents connected with the different periods of a nation's history. In handling a complex problem, we have to learn one thing at a time, and if confusion is to be avoided and progress secured there is a particular thing that must come first at a particular time. In the case of Old Testament criticism this particular thing was the theory of separate documents, J, E, D, and P representing varied stages in the life of the Hebrew nation and the Jewish Church. When we are told that the form of the theory is changing so rapidly that its original promoters would scarcely recognise it, we have to say that the change is not so great as this statement would imply; and if it were, it would be only what has taken place in all other regions of investigation; the first form of any theory is seldom its full and final form. But whatever may be the final form of this theory, it is the outcome of all the work that has gone before; and if the later form is more correct according to the further

knowledge of the facts, yet the earlier form was also substantially correct in its day, and strove to do justice to the facts then known. The impression left, then, was not that of a series of disconnected fragments or late supplements, but of a complex unity representing various stages of life ; that idea in some form was kept alive by the theory of documents from the very first, but it is possible for us now to link that idea with the facts along a great many clearly marked outlines. This theory may be said, then, to have been from the beginning an attempt to express the idea of historical development,—an attempt which could only come to full success through slow successive stages, because of the great variety and complexity of the facts involved. It must at first lay hold firmly of certain fixed points and circle round these until they are seen to be embraced in a continuous line of development.

The first thing was the discovery of different documents, and the proof that each document possessed its own individual character, linguistic, theological, and historical. Then the date and order of these documents called for careful discussion ; in other words, their relation to the nation's life and to each other must be fixed. When large agreement was reached on these points, then the movement, being still alive and by no means fixed or crystallised, began in a sense to work back upon itself ; this was not

re-action, it was simply fuller action of the same kind, a legitimate outcome of all previous activity. It could be clearly seen now that within these general and acknowledged strata there were "fragments" and "supplements" of many kinds, and exceedingly interesting in their character, demanding separate investigation. It followed that the late date of the final form of a document did not necessarily mean that everything in it was late; much material early in date and primitive in character might be incorporated in a document which only reached its present form at a late date. Finally, it was seen that the document was a compilation which admitted of still further analysis, and implied a long period of literary activity. If it is said that these admissions destroy the documentary theory, we have again to reply, No, they merely modify it by way of expansion and development; or, in other words, the form that now prevails could only have come to the front after or through the earlier form. This means that the century of toil that was needed to complete this theory has not been a waste of energy; the product has not been a mass of wild and contradictory conjectures, but rather a reasonable movement having a large logic and consistent meaning of its own. If it is now possible to arrange with some measure of correctness the various parts of the Old Testament in chronological order, so that we can see reflected

in it the growth of a wonderful religious life and the progress of a divine revelation, this is largely due to the careful, reverent toil which scholars have spent on this theory of documents. By their labour the Old Testament has become a different book; "old things have passed away, and all things are become new." The facts of language, theology, and history upon which this theory rests are such as can be made evident to all who care to examine them; in other words, what we have before us is not merely a statement that the life of Israel must, in its many aspects, have been a development because evolution is in all spheres the universal law of life, but a demonstration that the life of this wonderful people did follow a given pathway, and along that pathway was guided to clearer, fuller knowledge of God and to loftier heights of spiritual experience. We now write the history of the nation and its religion on the basis of the documents that have been carefully studied and arranged. When we are engaged in this process, and especially as it approaches completion, we see that it throws new light on the nature of revelation. It is easy for us to say, as it is often done, that we have come to see that the Bible has its human side; but the detailed process of criticism throws a flood of light on this general statement, and shows that it is not a mere apology for supposed errors and weaknesses, it is full of real meaning. When

attention was first attracted to differences in the style and structure of these documents, the natural result was to lay emphasis on this so-called "human element" in the Scriptures. In the abstract it might be admitted that God could inspire one great man, Moses, in such a way that he would have not only many forms of knowledge but also many styles of speech ; but even the most strictly orthodox felt that there was something mechanical in this view, and that it was more natural to suppose that this great man had used materials coming from a variety of sources. Men who were prepared to allow even the smallest amount of criticism were driven thus far, and some dignified defenders of the faith have tried to maintain this stand ever since. The argument from "naturalness," or from the relation of literature to the life from which it springs, when once it is admitted, is revolutionary. We must either take our stand firmly upon the whole mass of Rabbinic tradition, or we must travel a long way with the critics. If we are to avoid "scepticism," we must avoid it in a thoroughgoing, whole-hearted fashion ; it will not do to be for ever denouncing "scepticism," and then take the small doses that we think will suit our mental constitution. The treatment that many apologists mete out to the critics is so arbitrary and dogmatic that it may well be pronounced irrelevant and impertinent.

The style of thought and language is the relation of a particular piece of literature to a particular writer and age. It is a human relationship that we can understand and investigate. But when we once admit that such investigation is applicable to the Scriptures, we cannot limit it to suit our personal convenience or our Church dogmas; it must move on, not according to the eccentric, extravagant fancy of any individual critic, but according to its own laws,—laws of reason which prevail here as elsewhere. For example, it is a great mercy that we have been compelled to admit, not by abstract theorising but by a survey of the facts, that the Bible is not a book of divine dogmas dropped from the sky or dictated in a mechanically miraculous fashion; it has a human element, it stands in human relationships; in other words, it is literature growing out of human life. This admission then applies to date as well as authorship; it is just as unlikely that a number of different bodies of laws arose in the same period in the life of a small, simple people, as it is that a number of widely different styles and views belong to the same man. The apologist who wishes to save the Mosaic authorship of these diverse documents says they could arise in the Mosaic age or earlier, because we now know that writing belongs to very ancient culture, and that similar laws existed in Babylon at a very early date. But the critic replies that, however



much these institutions may resemble the laws and customs of other Semitic nations, in the form that we possess them they are an outgrowth of the life of Israel ; and the criticism, which enables us to connect each set of laws and each stage of religious culture with the particular period with which it is in living connection, does a great work, saving for us, at the same time, the independent life of Israel and the divine revelation that is manifested through that life. The view of revelation that is forced upon us by a consideration of the documentary theory does not allow us to believe that any doctrine can be revealed at any time or place ; there is an order, a progress, a movement from the natural to the spiritual until "the fulness of time" is revealed. In such a movement each stage is related in a natural, living way to the life of the people in the given period, and each stage is linked by living processes to every other stage. The attempt to place each sermon or song, each piece of history or each body of laws, into relation with the original life out of which it sprang and to which it appealed, is, of course, a study of human elements, of circumstances of time and place, of conditions which accompany, limit, and modify all human action ; but surely it is absurd to call this a sceptical process when it is possible for it to be carried on with the clear, firm conviction that in every part of it the living God is revealing Himself.

Now of all these attempts the documentary theory is the most complex and most comprehensive; it has to deal with such a mass of material and such a variety of subjects, that its investigations reach out into every sphere of Old Testament history and theology. Its beginnings were tentative and uncertain, its progress has been slow and laborious, but to-day it stands as a monument of patient skill and reverent research, one of the noblest tributes to the unfailing attraction and unceasing power of this great literature. It is from this view of the Pentateuch that we draw the fullest demonstration of the truth that "revelation" is not an abstract thing, bringing to us facts and dogmas from heaven out of relation to human experience; these literary investigations enable us, so to speak, to trace the course of the revelation; they show us how the manifestation of God comes to us through the life of man; at each stage we see the divine guidance adapting itself to the weakness and need of truth-seeking men.

The significance, then, of this documentary theory for the Old Testament and for Theology in general may be briefly summed up:

1. It is a theory which began in a small tentative fashion and in an apologetic spirit more than a century ago; it has stood the test of time, passed through fierce discussions, modified its form, and finally taken its place as a rich contribu-

tion of patient inductive science, which gives us the key to the study of all the historical books.

2. The first effect of the working of such a theory was naturally negative; the distance which separates between the occurrence of the events and the writing of the narratives was seen, in many cases, to be very great, and that which had been treated as literal history came to be regarded as poetic legend. But the patient sifting and comparing of the material gradually show that the negative phase was only temporary, and that when each part of the literature was placed in its own period it was possible to construct an outline of the history of this people, their institutions and thoughts, from the beginning. The result of this we have now in various textbooks on Old Testament History and Theology. All this is now being made available for ministers and students by a great variety of books written in our mother tongue by men whose scholarship is unquestioned, and who unite a bold spirit of inquiry with a deep reverent faith. This great mass of material is accumulating, and it will finally have a powerful influence on the study of the New Testament and on the reconstruction of Christian Theology.

3. More and more men have learned how slow was the growth of this rich material; we see now that the material did not necessarily emerge at the time when it was written down. There was

literature before letters, there was living tradition of poetry and story before it was fused into its final form. So, when we get the strata marked out we find fossils, so to speak, within these strata preserving fragments from a still more ancient time, and the strata themselves are seen to be a gradual growth and not a sudden creation.

4. Thus the idea or truth which is most abundantly illustrated by this theory is that of historical development or progressive revelation: we may use either of these two terms, for from our point of view they are just the two sides of the same thing. (See Chapter IX.) In all ages thinking men have had in some form the idea of "evolution" in the realm of life and knowledge; we see it recognised in the Old Testament, and we find suggestions of it in the teaching of our Lord Jesus and of Paul. This truth was preached in a fuller form at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and men saw clearly that it must apply to the growth of the Old Testament. The great law of progress present everywhere must be active here, but it has been the glory of this documentary theory that it has filled the abstract, philosophic statement with rich, concrete content. It has traced the particular steps and shown us how the movement took shape and grew. Now we know that there are simple, childlike things that come first, and things more thoughtful, subtle, and

complex that can come only later. We see the stages by which men have been led to rich conquests of truth and love, and we sympathise with men who have toiled for our good, and we adore the patience and wisdom of Him who is the God of our fathers.

5. This theory, then, is something that confronts the earnest student of the Old Testament; only by studying its history and mastering it can we come to a clear understanding of the modern position. It is not sufficient to point out in hypercritical fashion that there are many difficulties connected with it; the task is to understand it, refute it, and then set something more satisfying in its place. There has been abundant opportunity for opponents to do this, but we do not know of any one who has succeeded in the gigantic task. There is plenty of superficial scoffing and many foolish charges of "scepticism," but the main lines of this theory stand still in bold relief, and any student or minister who desires to be an intelligent expositor of Old Testament narratives and prophecies must be prepared to grapple with it and get the heart out of it, in order to have the real background for his personal study and practical work.

## CHAPTER XI.

### CRITICISM AND THEOLOGY.<sup>1</sup>

"It is no use attempting to minimise the difference between the traditional view and the critical treatment of the Old Testament. The difference is immense: they involve different conceptions of the relation of God to the world, different views as to the course of Israel's history, the process of revelation, and the nature of inspiration."<sup>2</sup>

These words were written by me a few years ago, and they are quoted by Professor McFadyen in his discussion concerning "the gulf" which is supposed to separate the two points of view and the two parties in this great controversy (*Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 315). I accept the full responsibility for these words, and shall now try to explain their meaning more fully; but I certainly cannot follow Professor Volck, quoted on the same page, who, speaking of the two points of view,

<sup>1</sup> A lecture delivered before the Philosophical Society of Queen's University, Jan. 14th, 1907.

<sup>2</sup> *American Journal of Theology*, Jan. 1902, p. 114.

says, "the gulf which separates them cannot be bridged"; and, while fully sympathising with the spirit of Professor McFadyen's chapter, we must remember that the brief sentence, "both sides admit that the gulf is impassable" (p. xix), merely describes the position of extremists on both sides. However, one must not lay too much weight on the word "gulf"; in this case it must be taken with the freedom that belongs to a metaphor rather than with the precision of a mathematical term. As a matter of fact, men do pass from one position to the other, either by the stress of sudden conviction or by slow progress from point to point.

In speaking of this great difference, what was meant was, of course, a difference in intellectual point of view. There was no intention to represent the man who clings to traditional views as being a foreign creature with whom the critic can have small sympathy and slight communion. We rejoice in the fact that two men holding different views as to the structure of the Old Testament can each draw from a particular passage of Scripture a spiritual lesson, and in some cases a similar lesson; that two men holding different views on matters of Biblical science may have kindly fellowship with each other as devout Christians and faithful citizens; but this unity of life does not lessen the difference in their philosophy of history and revelation.

Philosophy and criticism are not for direct

pulpit use; a man may be a powerful preacher who is not specially equipped in these departments; but if the preacher is to be an effective expositor of ancient literature, he will need to examine his texts with something of philosophic insight and careful criticism. The philosopher, who is concerned with the history of human thought and the movement of human life, and the critic, who patiently studies the literature in which great world-movements find their expression, these two workers are closely allied; they often deal with the same things from slightly different points of view, and they help the preacher to understand and appropriate the results of all kinds of scientific research. However, it is not possible now to illustrate fully the fact that the modern movement in Old Testament criticism has received fruitful stimulus from the side both of philosophy and physical science. We are called to consider a special aspect of this question.

Criticism is an attempt to place a particular document in its original setting, in relation to the period out of which it arose, or from which it received its individual stamp, and thus to interpret it as a revelation of human life, and afterwards to show the position of this revelation in the history of a particular people and of the human race. In these days, when division of labour and high specialisation are absolutely



necessary, we are indebted to the many workers in this department of literary and historical criticism for invaluable assistance in the study of the Old Testament. Literary criticism thus viewed is a positive science, and it follows the methods of other particular sciences in its endeavour to collect, arrange, and interpret its own facts. In some cases its results are supported by so many lines of evidence pointing in the same direction, that the conclusion amounts to moral certainty; in other cases the evidence is scanty and the conclusion, considered in itself, uncertain. But a detail which if it stood alone would continue to be obscure, may receive light from the general scheme of which it forms an essential though subordinate part. This sounds quite reasonable, and would be regarded as commonplace if we were dealing with some science that had no direct connection with theology. But here it is different. Many theologians and apologists, instead of seeking to discover what reconstruction of theological formulas is necessary, are spending their time and energy in fighting a hopeless battle. In such cases the influence of theological theory is allowed to have a greater weight than the critical examination of facts.

This charge, as we shall see, can be made on both sides. Dr. Orr expresses his conviction that those who accept the modern view of the Old Testament do so not from a scientific examina-

tion and explanation of the facts, but because of a bias given by their general "religious and historical standpoint." Strange to say, Dr. Orr adopts the course which he condemns in others; he tells us deliberately that we must first decide how we are to conceive of the religion which the Old Testament embodies before we attack the question, "How are we to conceive of the literature?" (Orr, *Problem of the O.T.* p. 4). In answer to Dr. Orr's charge, many of us are able to declare that we have tried to form our "religious and historical standpoint" through an examination of the facts; but if we have erred, the rebuke comes strangely from one who thinks that the question how the religion manifested its character can be settled before a critical examination of the documents is made. It seems that a mode of procedure which is legitimate and satisfactory when used by a defender of "orthodoxy" is very crooked and unfair in the hands of people of a different shade of theological opinion.

If the student had on the one side Dr. Orr, applying a correct theological theory in the interests of orthodoxy, and on the other Dr. Wellhausen, with capricious criticism working out a sceptical theory, the choice would be simple between such clear alternatives. But it is not so simple as that; in real life and with great issues it never is so simple. Note this statement: "There are, one must own, few outstanding

scholars at the present day on the Continent or in Britain—in America it is somewhat different—who do not in greater or less degree accept conclusions regarding the Old Testament of the kind ordinarily denominated critical; yet among the foremost are many whom no one who understands their work would dream of classing as other than believing, and defenders of revealed religion" (*ibid.* p. 7). This does not look as if the acceptance of the broad results of criticism was either a result or a cause of scepticism, but we are asked to believe that Christian scholars save their faith at the expense of their logic.

The fact that the critical theory was not exclusively the work of professional theologians or Churchmen renders it suspicious in the eyes of the apologist; but some of us are compelled to confess that when the history of such great movements is written, the candid record is not altogether to the credit of "the Church." The theologians have too often driven criticism into the outer darkness and then complained that it kept bad company. Surely we should be thankful that, in God's providence, strong men outside of narrow sectarian circles have contributed stimulus and instruction which have saved the Church from stagnation. Here, however, we have a somewhat different tone: "The critical hypothesis must, of course, be considered on its merits; but is there not, on the face of it,

a supreme improbability that a theory evolved under the conditions we have described should be, in that form, a theory adequate to Christian faith, or with which Christian faith can ultimately be content? Is it such a theory as Christian faith would ever have evolved from its own presuppositions? Can it ever be purged of its rationalistic leaven, and adapted to the use of the Christian Churches, without a complete re-casting on principles which are direct antitheses of those which obtain in the schools in which it originated? We take leave to doubt it" (*ibid.* p. 17). One would be inclined to think that the suspicion and prejudice here displayed do not promise well for a consideration of the merits of the case. But on this point, as on many others, we can immediately find a statement which qualifies, if it does not cancel, what has gone before: "It is not too much to say that one direct result of the application of the strictest historical and critical methods to the Old Testament has been to bring out, as never before, the absolutely unique and marvellous character of the religion of Israel. With the best will in the world to explain the religious development of Israel out of natural factors, the efforts of the critics have resulted, in the view of many of themselves, in a magnificent demonstration of the immense, and, on natural principles, inexplicable difference between the religion of this obscure people and every other" (*ibid.* p. 10). In this

connection our author pays a somewhat grudging and patronising tribute to the men "of fine literary gifts, wide culture, acute critical faculty, and genuine appreciation of the nobler elements in the religious and ethical teaching of the prophets," including on the linguistic side "that dry old rationalist Gesenius" (*ibid.* p. 10). Sufficient has been quoted to bring up the subject for discussion, so we may now address ourselves to the specific point at issue.

What we are face to face with is the difficulty of keeping separate the critical and the philosophical question; one must admit that they are closely related, and that they exercise a mutual influence on each other. Therefore the theological student, along with other helpful disciplines, needs training both on the philosophic and the critical side, that he may have a clear grasp of principles and be able to deal with concrete cases. But, after all, the number of philosophers is limited, and the great mass of people who have changed their point of view in respect to Hebrew literature have been driven to do so by the pressure of facts which could be recognised by those who were not gifted with a keen speculative faculty. So far as the Church is concerned, the greatest miracle, namely, that of a mechanical, verbal inspiration, was surrendered, not on account of speculative arguments, but through a keen and reverent re-examination

of the facts. It is true that modern philosophy, and the part that "the reign of law" has played in physical science have had their influence in creating the modern atmosphere, but it was the facts in the Bible itself that caused the change of front; these facts, seen, of course, in a new light. Men of this type did not think so much about the new light, they felt somehow that they had not looked properly at the facts before.

Dr. Bacon, speaking of the narrative recorded in Judg. xv., asks the pertinent question, "Will it be resented if, after the Revisers, by simply regarding Lehi as a proper name in ver. 19, have eliminated one of the most incredible prodigies of the Old Testament, the higher criticism proceeds to remove the equally stupendous one which immediately precedes it, by doing the same thing in ver. 16, namely, translating Lehi as a proper name" (*The Genesis of Genesis*, p. 14).

Now, no sane person would suggest that the Revisers had any bias against the supernatural. And the question whether or not this particular part of Samson's story is a fragment of an old battle-song, which has been misinterpreted, is a question that literary criticism should be allowed to settle on its own merits. In another case, Josh. x. 12, 13, the Revised Version, by printing four lines in the form of verse, has suggested to the intelligent reader that a very natural piece of poetry has been turned into prose, producing a

miracle that is quite incredible. The Revisers of the Old Testament were not at all radical in their treatment of the text, and we could certainly not accuse them of being perverted by a rationalistic bias. We might mention many scholars by name or speak in our own person, and say, No; the procedure was the other way. We did not attack the book for the purpose of getting rid of miracles, we set out to gain a truer knowledge of the literature, with all the light available; and many of the so-called miracles disappeared. For example, we were at one time quite prepared to believe that Isaiah wrote the great prophecy of comfort and hope addressed to the people in the Exile; we held to the traditional view until a closer knowledge of the text showed that this great sermon, according to its own testimony, came from a different prophet in a later age (Isa. 61-62). If a personal word may be allowed, I may say that then this great message became available for expository preaching, while the previous treatment was of the non-expository kind, in which the text is used as a motto or starting-point for a discourse on some important spiritual truth. A very good illustration of such a change is the Book of Daniel; until this generation the great body of English-speaking scholars clung to a belief in the exilic date and the literal historical character of the book, and this involved the acceptance of tremendous miracles; this was

not changed by direct argument against miracles, although such miracles were becoming more and more a burden to the faith of intelligent men, but by new light in the region of language and history which has revealed the real place and purpose of the book. Thus instead of literal miracles in the life of a few special individuals, we have God's miracle of mercy and deliverance to the nation in a great crisis,—a crisis fraught with great significance for the religion of Israel and for the life of the world. Thus we can with a good conscience reply to the charge of "anti-supernaturalism," that the real state of the case is, that by a serious study of the facts, in the world and in the word of God, we have been led to revise our conception of the supernatural, and have come to something that we believe to be truer and more wonderful. Perhaps we ought to have been more philosophic in the earlier stages, but now we are thankful that we travelled this slow painful way; because when we are charged with adopting sceptical criticism on general principles, we can reply, "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung."

The critical and philosophical questions though closely related can in a measure be kept distinct. Let us take an illustration from the realm of biology. Without attempting to define exactly what is meant by the term, we may say that a man may be an evolutionist and a theist; such a man may claim that he has drawn his



general theory from a wide survey of facts, and further, that his conception of God's action in the sphere of nature has been modified without being destroyed. Names will occur to you at once which show that men may hold the same biological theory while differing on philosophical questions, and that some men may live almost altogether in the realm of physical science, troubling very little about the philosophical implications. In these cases there may be a certain amount of incompleteness or inconsistency, but that the matter stands thus we know both from experience and observation.

A recent writer with a fairly strong conservative bias says, "Wellhausen has correctly emphasised the historical character of the Old Testament over against its purely dogmatic interpretation of former times; but this does not prove that his naturalistic conception of the Old Testament religion and its development is correct" (Professor G. H. Schodde, Ph.D., *Homiletic Review*, October 1906). There are those who are prepared to defend even Wellhausen against this charge of "naturalism"; that, however, is a personal question with which we are not immediately concerned. What we do maintain is that one may hold, in the main, the views of Wellhausen as to the development of political and religious life in Israel, and yet have a strong, clear faith that the guidance of

God is wonderfully manifested in and through that history. It is the work of the Christian philosopher or theologian to prove this; the Old Testament critic may see it quite clearly, but his special task is the interpretation of the literature.

Then again, in every scheme there are details which are doubtful, and it is natural that these should be drawn under the influence of the general theory. There is no harm in that if one takes care that the theory as a whole is based on a careful survey of the facts, and if one does not exert too much pressure on particular facts for the sake of consistency. For example, the small book bearing the name of Joel was at one time regarded either as very early or very late, as the references to external circumstances seemed to fit into either case; now there is an increasing body of opinion in favour of the late date, because, having obtained clearer ideas as to the development of the language and theology, the scale is turned in this direction. For some of us the precise shade of signification attached to the phrase "the day of Yahweh" is sufficient to settle this point.

Dr. Orr lays great weight upon his own general theory to save himself from conclusions to which other people profess to be driven by facts. An illustration of this is his explanation

of Gen. vi. 1-5, which in his view is "*sacred* tradition of *real* events and transactions in the lives of *real* men and women"; on this view the words "sons of God" must be interpreted to mean "good men" or descendants of Seth. The opinion now widely held on this passage is: (1) It is a fragment not originally connected with the Flood story to which it has been joined by a later editor. (2) That, while in the Old Testament there is no pure myth, but only poetic allusion to myths, and traces of mythological features in stories that have been worked over, here we have an antique fragment with a very strong mythological flavour. (3) According to Hebrew usage, "sons of God" must mean superhuman beings or angels. Facts drawn from many quarters support this interpretation, which is now generally accepted, but it evidently does not agree with a particular idea as to what an inspired literature ought to contain. Surely the wisest course is to re-adjust our views of the "inspired" and the "supernatural," to meet the needs created by the larger range of knowledge and the clearer light which God has vouchsafed to men through the toil of centuries.

Thus we are brought to the philosophical task; it is needful that our men of "light and leading" should show to the world that Christian teachers are not afraid of new light, that they rather

rejoice in it, and after the age of criticism a new era of construction can begin, uniting simplest piety with fuller knowledge, and keenest thought with deepest reverence. There is very much loose talk about "naturalism" and the "supernatural," so that we, on the theological side, are in danger of forgetting that the more a thing is natural, that is, the more life it has, the more it is permeated by the supernatural; just as the life of the Lord Jesus is more divine because it is so perfectly human. We need Professor McFadyen's warning against seeing the divine only in the "so-called supernatural." Because things that were once regarded as "supernatural," in the coarsest sense of that term, must now receive a new interpretation on account of a more careful examination of the documents, we must not suppose that therefore the element of divine guidance disappears from the history; it rather assumes a nobler form. To me, with my faith that the whole universe is filled with the presence of the living, self-revealing God, I cannot conceive, notwithstanding the eclipse of faith in individual cases, that the most severe criticism can ever banish the divine power from that great literature which is one of the choicest organs of its manifestation. If some scholars prefer to speak of "providential guidance," "historical evolution," and "psychological development," it does not

seem wise to quarrel about terms when the presence and purpose of God are frankly recognised. We cannot any of us claim to have formulated the full and final expression of God's relation to the world and to the life of man.

There are some who challenge our right to use the specifically theological terms such as "revelation" and "inspiration," on the ground that we have forsaken the faith that lies behind these great words. To this we reply that these words are not the special property of one generation or sect, they belong to the whole Church, taking that designation in its largest sense, and they have always been used with great variety of meanings. These great words must necessarily have a certain amount of elasticity, because they do not describe small, definite events, but spiritual powers and processes which may be conceived in a great many different ways. It does not follow that when the mechanical view of verbal inspiration was seen to be untenable, believing men were no longer entitled to speak of "revelation" and "inspiration." We are not prepared to give up words which are hallowed by sacred associations because we are convinced that the critical movement is destined to give to them a richer content, and that this movement itself, apart from the imperfections of individual workers, is due to the guidance of the revealing spirit. We do not

scruple to use sacred texts in a way that gives to them a fuller meaning than that which was present in the mind of the original writer, especially when we feel that the richer suggestions really grow out of the earlier meanings. It is a poor kind of orthodoxy that tries to fix a great word expressive of growing religious truth down to a narrow, stereotyped, dogmatic sense. Our forefathers rejoiced in the word "election"; it spoke to them of God's sovereignty, His supreme power and gracious purpose; they brooded over this word and the mysteries that it involved until they felt themselves to be as nothing in His sight, but yet out of this nothingness they arose with new strength to fight great battles; by a tremendous creed, which theorists tell us ought to have paralysed them, they were made to feel the dignity of human life and the possibility of achieving the noblest tasks. In recent years men have spoken more about "evolution" than election; they have been concerned with the processes rather than with the power that lies behind. Do you tell me that if I believe that there is very much truth in this talk of evolution, and that in so far as men of science can trace the lines of it they bring a message of God to our age, that, therefore, I must not speak of election? Surely election has more meaning than before; purpose is not less real because it takes a wider range. The thinkers among the Hebrew people grasped in a simpler

form the truth represented by both these words. Their consciousness of election for communion with God and service to men has been vindicated by God and in the long course of the world's history ; and their knowledge that God is revealed in different names and by various stages has been abundantly illustrated. The election is through the evolution. Criticism cannot answer the ultimate question why it is that God chose to make such an important contribution to the life of the world through this small, insignificant people, but it can show us that such was the case, and can help us to trace the growth of that life, pointing out how it was enriched and strengthened by the things that seemed likely to destroy it. To us the election and evolution find their completion in Jesus Christ and the movement that He created, which is again the source and centre of new developments in the world's highest life.

We venture, then, to speak of revelation through the literature which embodies this evolution. The literature is now larger ; instead of circling round a few great names, it represents the continuous life of a thousand years. Many nameless souls have poured into it their best thoughts and noblest songs ; it is God's gift, and through the toils and tears of men it was fitted to be the medium of His highest revelation. That familiar text, " God, having of old time spoken unto the fathers in the prophets by divers portions and in

divers manners, hath at the end of these days spoken to us in His Son"—has, through our critical studies, gained a richer meaning. We rejoice that our Bible is a book of this kind, not a collection of dogmas bearing the marks of one school and age alone, but a living literature which can pass beyond its local limitations and reach out for a large universal life. Is it possible anywhere to cut a sharp, clear line between the human and divine? Certainly not here; it is in the histories and poems that are most saturated with human feeling that we find God revealing to us most fully His justice and love. The "Paradise story" is no longer a literal history of "our first parents," mechanically dictated, or even handed down by tradition; what it is cannot be expressed in one word, but the idea that we have now of its varied elements and complex growth has not made it smaller or less valuable. With all its sorrowful pathos and child-like simplicity, it is a thing of beauty and a joy for ever. It comes from deep experience, and is full of rich suggestions concerning that battle of life which we must all fight. Even if there is no Gospel in it, it shows man's need of a Gospel, and his hunger after God. To us the more completely it becomes a human "document" the more truly is it a divine revelation. We refuse to limit the word revelation to any specific dogmatic dictation; and we refuse to agree to a divorce between the sacred and the



secular, the rational and spiritual. Even here we would utter the prayer :

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,  
But more of reverence in us dwell ;  
That mind and soul, according well,  
May make one music as before,  
But vaster."

## CHAPTER XII.

### CRITICISM AND THE PREACHER.

WE venture to affirm that criticism is not an "academic" thing, in any narrow sense of the word; it is not necessarily pedantry; if rightly studied it does not separate a man from real life, but carries him into the very heart of it. A few words on the relation of the Christian minister to this discipline may be taken from another place. "The only way in which the modern preacher can hope to fulfil this description is by having a real fellowship with the great souls of the past, as well as a living faith in God and a sympathetic comprehension of present needs. It may, of course, be urged that this is difficult; that the times of these men are so distant and their lives so remote from ours; that the words they have left are so scattered and broken, and hence not without painful toil can we even in an imperfect fashion reconstruct their history and get at their point of view. That is true; but is there any good work that is not difficult? If the man of science displays his devotion to truth in earnest

efforts to reconstruct earlier forms of life, if in other spheres the student of literature and art is content painfully to spell out the meaning of an ancient author, or seeks sympathetically to interpret the symbolism of a great painter, surely the preacher may be expected to give some loving care to those whom he claims as his spiritual ancestors. He has many helps at the present day, but the 'helps' of the right kind are precisely those which demand most severe and conscientious work from himself. As a matter of fact, if the divorce between religion and knowledge is not to become real and deep, the minister must be content to accept the fate of the effective workers in any noble profession—that is, he must work carefully through processes which cannot be seen by the mass of people to whom his results are presented. Study must be the joy of his silent hours, in order that his speech may do justice to his deepest life and be helpful to his fellow-men. This is what we expect from the doctor or the artist, and why should the minister be free from the hard universal law? The efficient physician must keep himself familiar with many sciences, but those who do their work most thoroughly bring the least suggestion of all this severe discipline when they come with a sympathetic smile into the sick-room. The artist must study anatomy, but we do not wish him to decorate our walls with grim skeletons; as a rule,

his figures are pictures of buoyant health, clothed in the most graceful drapery. Neither is the preacher expected to give lectures on history, or discuss 'theories of criticism' or methods of exegesis, but rather to do all that preliminary work so thoroughly that his exposition shall bring the noblest spirit of that past to meet the questioning of the present.

"This process cannot be made easy ; but, so far as we can see, it is the only way in which we can show real reverence to men who in their own day were not given to choosing short methods and easy paths. Building monuments to the prophets and forsaking their spirit is a manner of worship which ought by this time to have fallen into discredit among intelligent men. To praise the Scriptures as possessing the supreme revelation, involves the duty of endeavouring to appropriate the message in its varied forms. In this we have the example of the most faithful and effective teachers in all ages. This effort to get back to the actual life of men to whom we owe so much can only be partially successful ; but the effort itself is both a religious exercise and a means of culture. It is not a mere literary study ; such study is only a means to an important end. Further, it is far from being an unpractical thing, unless for us practical means shallow. What is more living, and in the best sense practical, than this very effort to break through the barriers of

our local limitations and personal prejudices, that we may hold sweet communion with a noble soul of another time or race or creed? The minister whose business is to understand and sympathise with all classes and conditions of men may thus find on the intellectual side of his life a real preparation for those duties which lay the largest strain upon his heart" (*Prophetic Ideas and Ideals*, pp. 8-10).

This statement is common-place enough, but it is necessary to make it and repeat it, because those who ought to know better sometimes think that we propose to substitute for living sermons dry disquisitions on history or vain quibbling about mere words. The history in which we are interested is the great movement of human life in which we can read the increasing purpose of a wise and living God. The words that move our souls are not mere signs or labels, but the forms of expression into which the great souls of the past have breathed their very life. The reverent student of history has a twofold purpose, to discover the life of the past and to minister to the life of to-day. Discussions about dates, comparisons of words and forms, may sometimes seem formal and abstract, but they have their place, and as a means to a great end they are of very great importance. Things that seemed dead and cold, when approached in a sympathetic spirit and with true insight, may glow with the glory of a new

life. This is, of course, true of all literary study, and it has been well put in the following paragraph by one who is a master in English literature.

"It is necessary also, especially to a true conception of the whole, to compare, to analyse, to dissect; and such readers often shrink from this task, which seems to them prosaic or even a desecration. They misunderstand, I believe. They would not shrink if they remembered two things. In the first place, in this process of comparison and analysis it is not requisite, it is on the contrary ruinous, to set imagination aside and to substitute some supposed 'cold reason,' and it is only want of practice that makes the concurrent use of analysis and of poetic perception difficult or 'irksome'; and, in the second place, these dissecting processes, though they are also imaginative, are still, and are meant to be, nothing but means to an end. When they have finished their work (it can only be finished for the time) they give place to the end, which is that same imaginative reading or re-creation of the drama from which they set out, but a reading now enriched by the products of analysis and therefore far more adequate and enjoyable" (Dr. A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearian Tragedy*, p. 2).

It is perfectly true that in such work there is hard labour which at times almost becomes drudgery; there are moments when the atmosphere

of the anatomy-room is sickening, when we have in our hand a heap of dead fragments, and the life seems to have fled from us so thoroughly that we are tempted to believe that there never was any life. But only those who have gone through such moments know the glory of real life. When the man of science comes back to the living whole, the world means more to him than to the superficial observer. Those who are interpreters of nature in any of its aspects, the poet or the artist, find that the genius call them to and qualifies them for the patient toil that is needed in studying the works of God and man. If the statement contained in the following paragraph is true, there is as much need for such labours in dealing with the Bible as elsewhere.

"The Bible was never more studied or less read than at the present day.' This paradox is true at least of the Old Testament. For two generations scores of patient scholars have toiled at the text, scanning each letter with microscopic care, and one result of their labours has been that, to the majority of educated men and women, of whatever belief or no belief, the 'open Bible' has become a closed, nay, a sealed book. It is not what it used to be; what it has become they do not know, and in scorn or sorrow or apathy they have laid it aside" (Todd, *Politics and Religion*, etc., p. 7).

What is the cure for this? A little more study

on the part of ministers and educated men, so as to get back to that distant past to which we owe so much, and to realise that men and women like ourselves were fighting great battles for those who were to come after them as well as for themselves.

This is not the only form of labour for the Christian minister; he must preach on all kinds of topics, bringing the highest spiritual teaching to bear upon the life of to-day, and varying the emphasis to suit the needs of his particular locality. But the question is, ought he not sometimes to preach Old Testament sermons, that is, interpret passages of that ancient book with close attention to their historical connection. No one suggests that it shall be criminal to take fine phrases, suggestive sentences from the songs or stories, and use these as mottoes for inspiring discourses, but the question arises whether in this case sufficient justice is rendered to that great literature; is not something more required? We have heard sermons on the words, "What doest thou here, Elijah?" in which there was nothing about Elijah and his work; and similar phrases have often been similarly treated. Such sermons contained instruction and wholesome advice; but surely if we believe that there is "a revelation" of any kind in the book, there is a message for us which can be caught only by coming into closer contact with these great



saints and heroes. Even those who think that for public reading and popular use as little change as possible should be made in the English Bible, insist that to understand the Old Testament at all a certain amount of historical study and critical analysis is necessary. In 1883, Matthew Arnold wrote two articles for the *Nineteenth Century* in which he made the following statements with regard to the Revised Version: "If by an act of authority the new version could be made to supersede the old and the old to go out of use, a blow would be struck at religion in this country far more dangerous than the hindrances with which it has to contend now—beer-shops, Dissent, Ritualism, the Salvation Army, and the rest of the long and sad list"; and speaking of the translation of a particular verse, Isa. ix. 5, in the Authorised Version, "No one of us understands clearly what this means, and indeed a clear meaning is not to be got out of the words, which are a mistranslation. Yet they delight the ear and they move us." But the whole tenor of the article, while protesting against losing the general effect in peddling details, is to insist upon the need of historical knowledge, and he specifically withdraws or modifies a former statement to the effect that he "would forbear to alter the old version of Isaiah where it made sense, whether the sense made was that of the original or not." Surely no one would undervalue

the beneficent influence of the noblest English version ; the intelligent preacher will make wise use of it in reading and quotation. But the great scholar from whom we have quoted would have been the last to deny that for the preacher and his hearers there is a great blessing in the wise use of historical criticism. It was by a clear study of the history that he was led to utter such words as these : "And nevertheless, *God is with us*. In this Jerusalem, in this city of David, in this sanctuary of the old religion, God has been known, righteousness lived, the root of the matter reached, as they never have been in the world outside. The great world outside has nothing so indispensable to mankind, no germ so precious to mankind as the 'valley of vision' has. Therefore 'he that believeth shall not take flight' ; there is laid by the Eternal in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation ! *God is with us*" (April 1883, p. 597).

If a man simply reads "Isaiah" to admire the noble language of the English version and to feel a vague inspiring influence, he has something to be thankful for ; but the intelligent reader, and especially the expositor, must go further than that.

Suppose we note what analysis has done for this book. When we regarded it as the work of one man, it was impossible to form a very clear idea of that man and his teaching, so many and

varied are the great ideas embodied in these sixty-six chapters; in this case we have to divide to conquer. The following analysis is now very largely accepted, and it seems very simple, but it has taken the work of more than a century to bring it to its present form: Chapter i., a collection of sayings of which we shall have something more to say. Chapters ii.-xii., a small book which admits of further analysis. Note that the first four verses are found also in Mic. iv. 1-4, and that it concludes with a brief, beautiful psalm, and that within this book we find the preaching of Isaiah in the first period of his ministry. Chapters xiii.-xxiii. Here we have another book, the bond that links the chapters together being the fact that they are all oracles on foreign nations, though not all by Isaiah. xxiv.-xxvii. A section that is apocalyptic and eschatological, and contains a variety of songs and oracles. It is regarded by scholars as one of the latest parts of the book. xxviii.-xxxiii. The section in which we find genuine preaching of Isaiah belonging to his later period. xxxiv. and xxxv. Two chapters which belong to the period after the Exile. xxxvi.-xxxix. Historical appendix found also in the Book of Kings. xl.-lv. "Deutero-Isaiah," the noble prophecy of comfort addressed to the people in the time of captivity and in their dark, hopeless days. lvi.-lxvi. A series of chapters belonging to

the period after the return from Babylon, when the struggling community is face to face with hard prosaic facts. Whether one accepts the prevailing views as to the dates here given or not, we are compelled to acknowledge that such an analysis is useful in our study of the book.

Returning to the first chapter, we are going to divide it for the purpose of exposition; it is helpful to pay attention to the analysis given by specialists. Take this division given by Duhm: ver. 1, the superscription; vers. 2-17, the discourse; 18-20, two oracles; 21-26, the poem on Jerusalem; 27-28, a late addition, speaking of Zion in a different tone; 29-31, a fragment denouncing the worship in the groves and among the trees. A later writer (Marti) connects the last two sections, and he regards them as being of late date; with such details we cannot now deal. But it is clear that the preacher, before dividing books and passages for the purposes of practical exposition, needs to pay attention to the work of men who have consecrated to this task great learning and skill. Or, to put it in another way, the critical commentaries which are now appearing, and which have in them something repellent to the ordinary reader, are the tools with which he must work in an independent spirit and with courageous industry. There may be, at times, too much vigour and rigour in the work of these specialists,

their distinctions may sometimes be too finely drawn, but in most cases they call attention to something in the text which is worthy of consideration by the careful expositor. Such discussion, quite unsuited to the pulpit, may be very fruitful for private study and personal thought. It is not to be expected that many pastors can keep abreast of the latest German speculators in exegesis and history, but those who are able to pass from Driver to Steuernagel and give some quiet hours to the study of historical and linguistic details, will find that whatever their final opinions may be, they have gained a deeper knowledge of Deuteronomy and the life that it represents.

The principle that Gunkel has laid down so distinctly and emphatically with regard to the narratives of Genesis is an important one, namely, that each story must be taken by itself. This means that a passage like Gen. ii. 4b-iii. needs not only to be studied for itself, apart from late Jewish theology and Christian applications, but it must also be freed from its own context, which is likely to overshadow it and lift it into a circle of ideas originally foreign to it.

If there is a J, E, and P distinction in Genesis, it must be reckoned with in the critical process that lies behind the exposition. We cannot any longer treat the Paradise story as the immediate continuation of the cosmology in chap. i. (see Chapter XIII.). In this particular we must

advance beyond the kind of treatment given by Dr. Marcus Dods in his noble discourses (*The Expositor's Bible*). This does not mean that the great ideas of Christian theology are rejected as baseless. Neither does it suggest that the thought drawn from the arrangement of the material in Genesis, that often with increase of population, wealth, and science there has been increase of wickedness, is altogether without foundation. But it does mean that it is worth while sometimes to go behind our advanced theology and study the ideas of these early narratives in their most primitive form in a way that brings us into close communion with our spiritual forefathers. It is very difficult to say how far such analysis should be carried; that depends upon the circle to which the commentary or lecture is addressed. Such a chapter as Gen. xviii., for example, ought certainly to be divided for purposes of exposition, since, if our criticism has any value at all, it is evident that the story in vers. 1-15 is more primitive in its character than the theological statement contained in vers. 22-33. Such illustrations need not be multiplied, but the principle needs to be insisted upon, that in many cases care must be exercised to find out the original unit in order to reconstruct a picture and rescue a thought from that far-off time. If it is said that this is mere literary dilettanteism, a waste of time for the man

who is face to face with pressing problems of practical life, we are content to leave the decision to those who are prepared to give it a fair trial. Many of the great leaders of the past have been keen students of history and strong in the field of exegesis. This must continue in some form if the Bible is to keep its place in the mind and heart of the people.

The study of ancient Hebrew literature as a means of reaching the life of men and women to whom religion was a matter of supreme interest and importance; the study of this life as a part of the great movement through which, in the providence of God, our own religion has come to us, surely this is a great subject to any man who believes that there is meaning and purpose in the life of humanity. This subject will be studied, that is certain, because it has tremendous power of attraction and inspiration; the question is whether the men who in a special sense represent the Church and seek to guide its life will rise to the level of this high demand. For ourselves, we are convinced that in any revival of religion worthy of the name such study must play its part. Precious are these memorials from the great past, and by reverent, thoughtful study we may show our gratitude that such records of God's dealings with men are preserved for evermore.

## CHAPTER XIII.

### MODERN INTERPRETATION OF ANCIENT STORIES.

THOSE preachers who have lived and worked during the last generation, when the results of long years of criticism were forced upon their attention and brought to the notice of the larger public, have had the experience of losing some of the Old Testament stories, so far as pulpit use was concerned, and then the joy of finding them again in a richer, more suggestive form. When a man was passing to a different standpoint and a larger, freer thought of inspiration, it was difficult, for a time, for him to know what to make of the early narratives, which had formerly been treated as parts of actual world history. It was no longer possible to write beautiful essays on the first chapters of Genesis, ignoring the results of criticism as formulated in the documentary theory and the ever increasing flood of light from ancient Babylon. It is impossible to make comments upon these stories without revealing, directly or indirectly, our point of view

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as to the whole of the Old Testament, and the amount of criticism that we have assimilated or rejected. In dealing with a late poem like Ps. lxxiii. the Christian preacher may feel quite at home, for this saint of the olden time comes in many respects near to the Christian spirit; and simply to give a noble paraphrase of the psalm, to tell in clear, simple words how he fought and conquered doubt, this in itself is helpful and inspiring. If we care to follow with real attention the story of this "Pilgrim's Progress through Doubt to a Higher Faith," we are face to face with a spiritual conflict which, both as to substance and form, is not unlike the battle which we have sometimes to meet. But if we go five or six centuries farther back, the material is not so easily handled; we are tempted to fall back upon vain apologies or barren allegorising. There is no salvation for the preacher along that line; he must first exercise severe critical processes in the study in order to be equipped for real interpretation in the pulpit.

Let us take as the first illustration the story of the Tower of Babel, Gen. xi. 1-9. It seems quite evident that it is not necessary to apologise for this simple story, or to try to prove its inspiration from the historical science that it contains. Dr. Orr, seeking to cast light from archæology on this interesting passage, says, "A still wider result from these explorations, in their bearings on our

subject, is the growing conviction that 'the plain of Shinar' (chap. xi.), or Southern Babylonia, was really the centre of distribution of the families of mankind. Babylonian civilisation is carried back by the discoveries at Nippur to a period so much earlier than that of any other known civilisation, that the inference seems irresistible that it is the source from which these other civilisations are derived." "The Biblical account of these matters, in short, is found to rest on far older and more accurate information than that possessed by any scholars prior to the new discoveries" (*The Problem of the O.T.* p. 402). Well, what is the good of this if our faith in the Bible does not rest on this kind of thing? Our author assures us elsewhere that "inspiration does not create the materials of its record, but works with those it has received" (p. 486). But further, the statement, while nominally accepting the great age of the Babylonian civilisation, seems still to have as its background the old idea of a world about six or seven thousand years old. That Babylon was a source and centre of civilisations is one thing, that it was the centre of the distribution of the families of mankind is surely not the same thing. Hear, then, what Dr. Hommel has to say on this point, "In the biblical story of the Tower of Babel (Gen. xi. 1-9), ver. 9 is probably a later addition, for Babel was certainly not amongst the *oldest* sanctuaries of the land of

Shinar (Chaldæa)" (*H.D.B.* i. 213). By this bit of minute criticism the archæologist destroys the point of the story; but in so doing he shows that he realises the immense age that lies behind the movements and migrations of humanity, and that we do not reach anything primitive when we arrive at "Babel."

If we turn to archæology as represented by Dr. Pinches, we find, as we might expect, that when the archæologist deals with an ancient piece of literature there is no support for the literal interpretation to be gained from that quarter. This scholar awakens our expectation when he tells that it is needful to go carefully into the matter to satisfy the believer of to-day with regard to the story being a real historical fact, because as an authoritative narrative it has had the full belief of all the faithful for many thousand years. The satisfaction given to the believer may be found in the following statements: "Concerning the miracle of the confusion of tongues, there is, of course, no historical reference. The Babylonian inscriptions know nothing of it. Yet the stranger visiting Babylon could not have been otherwise than struck by the number of languages spoken there" (Pinches, *The O.T. in the Light of the Historical Records of Assyria*, etc., p. 139). "There is great improbability that the statement that the whole earth was of one language and of one speech was

ever believed by thinking men at the time as an actual historical fact. A better translation would be the whole land, that is, the whole tract of country from the Mountains of Elam to the Mediterranean Sea" (*ibid.* p. 133). After this somewhat free exegesis we have still further criticism in the form of a suggestion that the whole narrative is probably an interpolation taken from an ancient source; and, finally, we are assured that "it was probably given for, and recognised as, the legend current in Babylon at the time, and must, therefore, have been recognised and valued by the people of the time at its true worth." There is very little real "satisfaction" here, as we do not go beyond a purely negative process.

It is now generally recognised that this story belongs to the Yahwist stratum, and that it has in some measure the character of a duplicate (compare the different accounts of the dispersion and of Babel in Genesis X.). Gunkel carries the analysis farther, and thinks that we have in chap. xi. 1-9 two stories, the City story, which tells us of the building of a city for the purpose of making a name, and the consequent confusion of tongues when Yahweh thwarted the ambitious men; and the Tower story, which tells of the building of a lofty tower to prevent the scattering of mankind, a plan that is also brought to nought by the interposition of Yahweh. If

this is correct, then it is likely that the second story ended with a name, the name of the tower, that played upon the verb "to scatter," just as in the City story there is the word-play, Babel and "balal" (to confound). If one marvels at the exceeding brevity of such stories, it is well to remember that the stories which circulated among simple people in spoken form must have been brief and compact. From the structure of the story we pass now to its origin.

Shinar is evidently a Hebrew name for some part of Babylon, but the exact meaning is uncertain; the story relates to Babylon, and probably arose in or near that city. It may have existed in an earlier, more "heathenish" form; or, in other words, it is not the invention of the Yahwist writer to whom we are indebted for its preservation. In its present form it presents Yahweh as the one supreme God, but its phraseology shows a recollection of an earlier mode of thought. A patriotic Babylonian would not speak thus of his city and one of its temple towers; we have here rather the impression made upon a simple-minded foreigner by the many languages and the magnificent buildings in that great centre of population. The name "Babel" is here derived from the Hebrew; and the feeling of astonishment at the great brick buildings would be natural to a dweller in Palestine, where stone was used for important build-

ings. Hence we may say that the story is in many respects Hebrew in its present form. It does not glorify Babylon or express the thoughts of a cultured Babylonian.

"The legend answers several questions. The first recension explains the origin of various languages and at the same time the origin and name of the city Babel; the second the scattering of men over the earth, and along with this the origin and name of a primitive 'Tower' in Babylonia. The legend answers all these questions in its poetic childlike style; it is not in a position to give a reliable scientific explanation of the Babylonian name; just as little does it know anything from historical recollection concerning the origin of the city and the tower; still less has it an historical tradition from the time in which the oldest languages and peoples of Hither Asia arose, for no human recollection reaches to that time. This story is therefore not to be considered as historical tradition, but as a naïve, poetic answer of the old time to certain questions" (*Genesis übersetzt u. erklärt von Gunkel*, p. 89). On this view the story contains the observations and impressions of thoughtful men. From such modest beginnings did the vast, complex fabric of science grow; but the ancient Hebrews did not travel far along the scientific path, their thoughts were set supremely on what we call the practical and spiritual. If,

as the old tradition says, all nations came from one primeval pair, how is it that they show such striking differences? If they had remained one united people, what great things they might have done; but it was Yahweh's good purpose to set bounds to their ambition and to curb their overweening pride. The Hebrews knew that Babylon was a very ancient city; for, according to tradition, some of their ancestors had come from that region, and they placed there the first great movements of the human race. In Babylonia, gigantic buildings raised by slave labour testified to the vanity and selfishness of men; some of these great monuments, half finished or already crumbling to decay, showed how foolish it was for men to hope for an eternal kingdom or an everlasting name; such privileges and prerogatives belong to God alone. If we treat the story with fullest sympathy, we cannot bring it up to the level of the science and theology of our own time, but there is a great spiritual lesson in it; it has a beautiful blending of living, human interest, intellectual curiosity, and faith. It is of special significance to note how the religious powerful faith of the early Hebrew teachers modified these primitive traditions and used them for wise ends. "What the author of our story, who was quite certainly a pious Israelite and no Babylonian, had heard concerning Babel's old history and its old buildings, that

he uses for the purpose of exhibiting Yahweh's power in the history of the first beginnings of human culture. The history of our text teaches us how a pious Israelite of old Israel sets the oldest history of mankind in the light of his faith" (Loofs, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte*, etc., p. 30). Thus criticism frees the preacher from the impossible task of harmonising this and similar stories with the ideas of our own time; each expositor is now at liberty, in his own way, to show that in the simplest stories there are suggestions of eternal truths.

The Assyriologists are not able to furnish Babylonian parallels to the story of Cain and Abel, though they make earnest efforts in that direction; they give us instead speculations concerning the story of Tammuz or Adonis, which probably have little to do with the matter. This narrative appealed strongly to us in the days of our childhood; Cain and Abel have been for us ever since living figures from the world's earliest period. The story retained its suggestive significance even when we were tormented by historical problems. When we had solved the somewhat juvenile puzzle concerning Cain's wife, others more important remained, and some points will for ever belong to the region of conjecture. These primitive stories have been put together to give the appearance of a connected history, and elaborate theological theories have been



built upon the manner of this combination. Critical analysis now enables us to go behind these later arrangements and interpretations; we must take each picture separately and study it in and for itself. Then we see that the story of Cain and Abel does not belong to the beginning of the world's history, but to a later time, when men were organised into tribes and societies. There are at least two Cains, for the nomad and the city-builder can scarcely be the same. For our present purpose, these critical questions, while very important, must remain in the background; we are seeking to catch the spirit of the story. In early days writing material was scarce and stories were limited in number; the same material had to pass through different forms and serve a variety of purposes. It is possible that originally there was here an account of the relations of two tribes, and that the "mark of Cain" had a tribal significance. This much seems clear, but it is no longer possible to trace clearly the primitive form; the identification of Cain with the Kenites is attractive but not convincing. The two figures stand out now in their individual characters; in their speech and conduct they reveal certain great ideas and living beliefs of the Hebrew people. Unfortunately the picture has not quite escaped the ravages of time and change: ver. 7 is in poor condition, it is difficult to determine whether it is a warning to

Cain not to yield to discontent, or a statement of his freedom and power to choose between good and evil. Perhaps the writing had been illegible and some scribe attempted to restore it from iii.

16. Sufficient of it is clear enough to carry our thoughts back to distant times and other forms of thought. But in order to follow it we must be willing to dismiss for a while our present theological conceptions, and to believe that thoughts which to us seem very imperfect were strong and satisfactory to men of earlier days.

The sacrificial worship is here carried back to the earliest days, and while this does not square with later Jewish theories, it is a correct tradition; long before Moses lived and before the Hebrews existed as a nation, men rendered homage to God by their sacrificial offerings. Why, then, was one sacrifice accepted and the other rejected? Dr. Driver, while noting the opinion that there underlies the story an early struggle between two theories of sacrifice, which ended in the triumph of the theory that the right offering to be made consisted in the life of an animal, prefers the view that there is "a collateral aim of the narrator to emphasise the prophetic teaching that it is not the gift, but the spirit in which the gift is offered, which determines its value in the sight of God" (Driver, *Genesis*, p. 64. See also Kent, *Origin and permanent Value of the O.T.*, p. 239). This is a great truth, and we have the

authority of the New Testament for connecting it with this passage (Heb. xii. 24). Was not the prophetic teaching rather a sharp contrast between the worship by sacrifice and the worship of a good life? (Amos v. 21; Hos. vi. 6; Isa. i. 12). Is it not well for us to remember that there were days long ago when the most thoughtful men had not reached any great depth of spiritual refinement? They could then say that Yahweh blessed the shepherd and rejected the tiller of the soil simply because it was His will. There is much tribalism and sectarianism still clinging to our religion, though this is no longer in harmony with the highest conception of religion; under the influence of our Saviour's teaching it will in due time be cast off as one of the beggarly elements of the past.

Now, in our complex civilised society we expect that the administration of justice will be carried on with calm deliberation and absolute impartiality. This ideal is kept constantly before us; but sometimes machinery works in a slow, irregular fashion, and the crowd gives way to the lust for vengeance; then we see that "primitive man," a creature of hot blood and fierce prejudice, lies not far below the surface. In this case we are told that the blood of the man who has been brutally slain lies upon the ground unburied and unavenged: no one has undertaken the sacred office of justice, so it cries to Heaven, and Yahweh

hears the dread appeal. This is not poetry, it is not figurative speech, it is grim reality; every word is felt as absolutely true, and all too weak to express the faith that God in heaven will vindicate justice. He is an avenger of blood and a righter of wrongs. When our political constitution is in danger of becoming mere machinery, we must get back to these permanent fundamental ideas which alone can give meaning to our legal terms and weight to our legal forms.

Now we speak quite literally of the "round world," and we visualise the tiny globe on which the drama of human life is played; each morning we receive our newspapers, and note in the mind's eye the places where the stress is fiercest. Not from such a world, swinging in limitless space, circled by swift ships and swifter trains, did our story come, but from some small portion of the land where men tilled the soil or tended the sheep, and had as a dim outlook the great and terrible wilderness. The unworthy member of society is rejected by the soil, the very earth takes the side of justice; it refuses to yield fruit to the man who has poured innocent blood upon it. Man is dependent on the soil; his life is bound up with that of the family, the clan, and the tribe; cut off from these he becomes a wanderer, "a tramp"; no one is responsible for him, any one may slay him. The man who owes everything to society should respond to social claims and show respect

for social duties. A man without a mark, a "passport," to show to what tribe and god he belongs is a helpless creature. The mark of Cain was a gift of mercy, a protecting sign. The passport to-day means that the weight of a great nation lies behind the individual man. We talk much in these days about society as an organism, and the solidarity of the race; and we do well to commune with men who lived in a small world less fully equipped with political forms and social machinery, with men in whose lives these ideas were primitive and palpitating, men whose very existence depended upon loyalty to the tribe and the due observance of the fact that each man was his brother's keeper and helper.

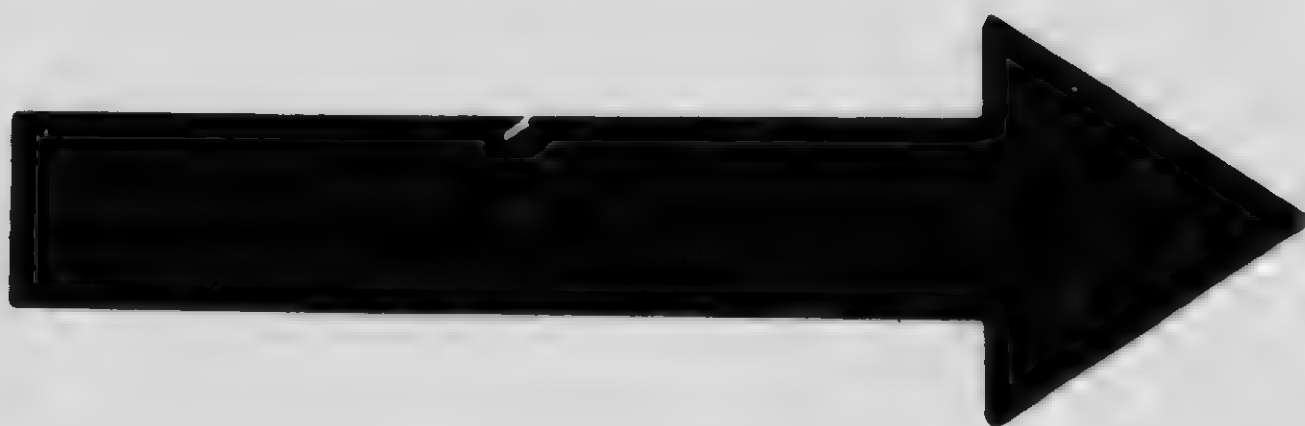
The story of Abraham's faith as shown in his willingness to sacrifice his only son must always remain one of the most attractive and living pieces of Hebrew literature. Notwithstanding its pathetic beauty, it began to be burdensome to the Christian conscience until the idea of historical development was fully grasped, and various methods were used to show either that God never gave such a command, or to explain how it was possible for Him to give it. There is no need to quarrel about such phrases as "historical development" and "progressive revelation," each term has its own shade of meaning and its appropriate use; the people are interested in the story of human life, but they do not worry over

fine theological distinctions which to the average mind seem to be meaningless or merely conventional. It is sufficient now to recognise broadly the fact that centuries ago an enlightened, pious man might regard a command as coming from God which to us is utterly irreconcilable with a true thought of the Divine Wisdom and Love. A man living in the supposed age of Abraham might face such a possibility as this, but for the Apostle Paul, fifteen hundred years later, such a thought could not arise; by the teaching of inspired leaders it had been removed from the realm of enlightened practical religion. Only an ignorant literalism could express itself in this way; we have learned by centuries of experience and by the highest examples what is the true nature of sacrifice and service.

When we now attempt to expound this narrative and make it a means of instruction to the men and women of our own day, we have to consider first the conclusions which have been reached by a great body of scholars: (1) The narrative is not a contemporary record; it did not take its present form until long after the "Abrahamic Age." Hence it must be placed in relation to the life of Israel as revealed in the historic period, and we must compare it with actual facts and important teaching of that period (Judg. xi.; 2 Kings iii. 27; Mic. vi.). That child-sacrifice does not hold any place in Hebrew

religion strictly so called, but at special times it pressed in from surrounding nations or as a survival from the distant past. (2) That in this piece a traditional story is used to glorify Abraham as the pattern of faith and self-sacrifice, while through the form in which this is presented it is shown that Yahweh does not desire child-sacrifice. (3) An ingenious attempt has been made by Gunkel to go still farther back, and to show that in its earliest form the story was a legend connected with a particular sanctuary, telling how in the distant past the sacrifice of a ram was by the god's command substituted for the offering of a child. Thus a very ancient story has been transformed and used as a sermon in favour of heroic obedience and submission, but against the crude and cruel forms in which such faith had often found expression. All this is complicated, and belongs to the study rather than the pulpit; but it is evident that before a preacher can give a living exposition of these themes he must face these questions and make up his mind as to the character of the story; then, with a clear "exegetical conscience" he can give a suggestive interpretation and suitable application.

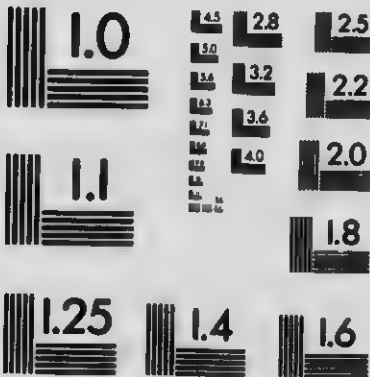
When we turn to the suggestive story recorded in 2 Sam. xxi. 1-14, we have the advantage of dealing with an account that is accepted as both ancient and literally correct; it probably comes from the period to which it refers, and,





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apart from small textual questions, gives a full and clear statement of what actually occurred. This, however, does not make it an easy subject for exposition, it belongs to a time and circle of thought remote from our own; their ways were not as our ways, nor their thoughts as ours. There is a certain sublimity about this tragic story; everything goes on with dignity and solemnity, or, in other words, with a real religious spirit. The famine is interpreted as a direct manifestation of Yahweh's anger; the oracle is consulted and the answer received; this answer shows a stern sense of justice that refuses to be bound by tribal limitations; vengeance is carried out in a grim fashion, and one poor mother stands in silent submission to guard the bodies of her dead. Thus we have a primitive interpretation of nature, a clear recognition of vengeance, and a magnificent manifestation of the spirit of motherhood. Before a scene that is so real, so instinct with primitive ideas and elemental passion, our poor apologies shrink into silence. Why not frankly acknowledge that these people are seeking after God, and finding Him in their own way? Their science, their theology is different from ours, but they are in dead earnest; in the world about them and in their own lives they are determined to find the dread presence of the great Judge. We are in danger of losing Him in all this complicated machinery and tame convention-

ality ; if we will cease pitying these ancestors of ours, cease apologising for them and accept them as in some sense messengers of God, we may learn much from them. David was not an advanced theologian, but he was a generous, heroic soul, the creature of his age as well as in a measure the maker of it, a man who was struggling through the dim light to a clearer vision of God.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE MESSAGE OF THE PROPHETS.

IN this brief statement it is not possible to attempt to disentangle the different lines of teaching, moral, theological, Messianic, and eschatological, that are embodied in the various prophetic books. That is a large field to explore ; it would require much time, labour, and skill. The prophets we now refer to are the men who in the early days fought against superstition, and preached to their fellow-men a noble faith ; the men whose teaching, freed from non-essentials, is summed up in the great text, " He hath showed thee, O man, what is good ; and what doth Yahweh require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God ? " The great theological ideas, the striking predictions, the mighty hopes for the future, play a great part in giving to Hebrew literature its particular character, in forming the Jewish Church and preparing the way for Christian theology. But in these lectures we do not come so far down, we are concerned with the background of the

Hebrew religion, its struggle for life in opposition to tribal traditions and family customs, its success through prophetic teaching in setting forth clearly the great faith in the righteous God who demands righteous conduct as the true worship and the highest form of service.

There is considerable ambiguity in the phrase "prophetic" and "pre-prophetic" as applied to the history of Hebrew religion. Distinctions of this kind which we are in the habit of drawing must never be made too deep and abrupt. It is quite legitimate to speak of one document as prophetic and of another as priestly, when we mean that in one case the predominant interest is in life and ideas, while in the other it is in worship and ritual. Even that distinction is not an absolute one. But when we try to draw a line between one period of the nation's life and another, we need to be even more guarded. We are not dealing with a piece of dead mechanism that can easily be separated into its various parts, but with living fibre whose threads run backward and forward in delicate and subtle ways. That in a very real sense there is something new and creative in the prophetic movement of the eighth century B.C. cannot be denied, but this movement must have had its vital relations with the past, and we must not regard this work as an absolutely new beginning. We have to admit that when the new dates for the various documents were first

accepted there was danger of setting the work of the writing prophets in sharp contrast to all that had gone before. The contribution of Professor J. Robertson, *The Early Religion of Israel*, rendered service at this point even if it did not give full justice to the critical position. A statement such as that made by Dr. George Adam Smith in his volume on *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament* is, to say the least, open to misconstruction. "It is plain, then, that to whatever heights the religion of Israel afterwards rose, it remained before the age of the great prophets not only similar to, but in all respects above-mentioned identical with, the general Semitic religion; which was not a monotheism, but a polytheism with an opportunity for monotheism at the heart of it—each tribe being attached to one God, as to their particular Lord and Father" (p. 130). Even in the few years that have passed away since these words were written, much has been said on the origin of Hebrew monotheism and the nature of Semitic religion in general, but even before that time critics quite as radical as Dr. Smith were in the habit of laying more stress on the earlier prophetic stages of the religion. Professor Marti, whose radicalism in the region of literary criticism leaves nothing to be desired, in his history of the Israelite Religion gives a section to "Moses, a Prophet." "And if we name him a prophet,

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this is not merely because Deut. xviii. 18 so names him, but because his activity, as to its origin, purpose, and means, was similar to that of the other prophets. God's revelation is the origin, God's lordship the purpose, the announcement of God's will the means of the same. He is distinguished from the others in this alone, that he was the creator of a movement in which others, after him, were called of God to bring to a still higher stage of knowledge, that he was the founder of Yahwism which his prophetic successors should raise to the true monotheism. Moses laid the foundation of the most important development, which, because there dwelt in it a movement towards the ethical, led to the perfect revelation in Christianity. Therefore the praise which Deut. xxxiv. 10 ff. lavishes upon him, that no other prophet has arisen in Israel like him, is justified for Old Testament times; for only on the foundation of his work can the other prophets be understood" (Marti, *Geschichte des Israelitischen Religion*, p. 59). Compare also his chapter on The Nomad Religion in a more recent volume, which concludes with the following words: "The Israelite nomad religion stands out in striking contrast from the background of the common Semitic nomad religion from which it originated. Compared with the common polydemonism, it is a prophetic popular religion. Jahwe is the God of the people, and the internal social development

is His concern as well; that is why the germs which in after times developed so clearly into ethical demands existed in the infancy of the religion of Israel. By the side of Jahwe the people of Israel is not allowed to honour any other god as its god. The old deities recede, and there is no room for polytheism, for the belief in many gods as the gods of the people of Israel. Other peoples may have their own gods; Israel's God is Jahwe, and none other is to be worshipped beside Him. Monolatry is the hallmark of the old Israelite faith" (Marti, *Religion of the Old Testament*, p. 70).

It is worth while dwelling on this point, since the complaint has so often been raised that modern critics cause the prophets of the eighth century to arise without any previous preparation. True, some extremists relegate those earlier centuries completely to the region of legend, but the main trend of criticism is not in that direction.

Stade, in his *Old Testament Theology*, points out that the phrase "pre-prophetic" is used only for want of a better. It is liable to misunderstanding, since the religion of Israel so far as founded by Moses is of prophetic origin; and prophets arose in it before the eighth century (p. 24). "So far as the work of Moses is rooted in a mission committed to him, and has as its presupposition a special revelation, he is a prophet, which, of course, is also claimed for



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Miriam, Ex. xv. 20; Num. xii. 2. Hence, although he passes in a high degree beyond the circle of the prophets' activity, he is regarded in later times as a prophet, Deut. xviii. 18, of course as one without a fellow, who spoke with Yahweh face to face, xxxiv. 10. The oldest passage that designates him as a prophet (nabi) is, if genuine, Hos. xii. 13. The revelation which came to Moses as an inner experience concerning which all authentic information is lacking, cannot be described with precision. To the Christian its reality is confirmed by further development which had its origin in Moses" (p. 32). In an earlier essay, this scholar, who is regarded by many as extremely radical, had clung firmly to the historical character of the work of Moses. "If we had no legend concerning the work and person of Moses, we would have to conclude from the course of Israel's history that Israel's nationality and religion were founded in some such events as those which the religion relates, and that these produced the peculiar tone of Israel's religion. Hence it does not seem permissible to doubt the history of Moses" (Stade, *Ausgewählte Akademische Reden*, etc., p. 160).

This means that as far back as we can go the Hebrew religion has a prophetic element in it; that is, it is not a mere nature worship of any kind; its God-inspired leaders have the thought, if even in a simple form, of one who binds the

nation together, guides its destiny and shapes its life. This conclusion is not weakened by the fact that we are able to hear so little of the direct speech of these earliest leaders; if the words of the writing prophets are great and everlasting deeds, the deeds of these silent heroes are a great word of revelation. The evidence before us, if inferential, is of the strongest kind, and is based upon the actual existence and peculiar character of the religion. Amos was not the first who heard the all-compelling voice, and brought from the inner sanctuary messages of real power to bear upon the daily life of men. Isaiah had a clearer vision of the King; but long before him men confessed the supremacy of Yahweh, and proved the power of a living faith to nerve them for heroic deeds. Hosea gave new tenderness to the thought of loyalty and service, but in still earlier times some chivalrous feelings and kindly sympathies were nourished and strengthened by the consciousness of the common faith and common brotherhood. All through the history, in spite of the scantiness of the record, we gain glimpses of such men, working in rude times and often by rough means. But in their efforts there is something deeper than political enthusiasm and ecstatic rapture, there is a recognition of certain righteous laws that are binding upon all classes. Many of these men might resemble

in their form of service and manner of life the devotees of religion among other Semitic peoples, but there was a nobler leaven working among them. Great heroic figures such as Elijah tower above the mass of their fellows and leave an impression that can never be lost. Though the story of such a man's life cannot all be accepted as literal history in our sense of that term, yet we can now see clearly that he not only fought with noble intolerance for the religion of his own people against foreign corruption, but also sought to vindicate righteousness within the borders of his own nation. Gunkel's popular book on *Elias, Jahve und Baal* is an illustration of very radical criticism united with a determination to reconstruct the history in a positive manner and make its moral and religious significance stand out clearly. After describing various kinds of prophets and seers of this period, he says, "Elias might resemble in many things prophets of the ordinary stamp, but still he is much more than they. He does not scorn to receive gifts from the faithful, but it is far from him to turn prophecy into a trade. The great man can now and then bow down to the need of the poor and to the help of the widow, but his special circle of action lies in the great things that concern the whole people. He is, as were others in his time, a 'political' prophet: but he does not, like the usual politicians among

the prophets, stand on the side of the rulers, he rather opposes the king; in this he is like a Micaiah, the opponent of Ahab, an Ahijah, a Samuel when he rejected Saul's kingship. Yes, more than Samuel and Ahijah he stands in opposition to his people; he predicts destruction for Israel. And in this we recognise his kinship with the greatest among all Israelite men of God, with Moses who also must struggle with his contradictory people, still more plainly with the great writing prophets who follow on Elijah, with the series of prophets who begin with Amos, Hosea, Isaiah. All these later ones like Elijah give predictions concerning Israel's destiny, they are prophets of evil in conflict with their people. They are the legitimate continuers of Elijah's work" (p. 47).

A little more quotation of this kind may be tolerated, as it illustrates the fact, which we wish to emphasise, the existence of a succession of men who endeavoured to keep the people faithful to their own religion and to lift that religion to a higher stage; and at the same time it shows us how men who use the critical method most thoroughly are seeking with the greatest patience to recover positive results in the history of Israel's life and religion. Speaking of Elijah's relation to monolatry, he says: "It is not easy to describe correctly the position of Elijah on this point in the history of religion.

For, on the one side, it is certain that in his enthusiasm for the one Yahweh to the exclusion of every other God he was unintelligible to the majority of his people; this indeed is the tragedy of his life. On the other side, they have listened to his preaching; he has become the "troubler" of his people, even as he was reproached with being; he has with his word kindled the brand which set fire to the king's house and consumed it so that none were left. And in Judah, Baal was rooted out by the people of the land. Also the Yahweh religion was from the beginning, from the time of Moses, a religion of zeal and already in the oldest time the worship of Baal-peor—witness the old legend Num. xxv.—was felt to be sin, apostasy. We may unite these two series of considerations, while we suppose that in Elijah, and those of similar disposition, feelings of the oldest Israel which had been forgotten in wide circles and only survived among the few, now in this crisis of the people and the religion come to the front again; at all events we know the significance of this feeling of monolatry for the following time. Already the legend of Elijah shows how these thoughts continued to work; those who narrated these stories did not recognise Ahab's syncretism, maintaining that he did not worship Yahweh alongside of Baal, but had fallen away from Yahweh; whoever is

not for Yahweh alone is against Him. The coming prophets will cause to sound more mightily the keynote which Elijah has struck. This hatred of Elijah against Baal, posterity will cherish against every heathen god: the gods of the heathen are nothing, the whole earth belongs to Yahweh; He is its Lord and Creator. The hatred against foreign gods will in later times be sharpened by Israel's wretchedness; it will not only be despised as a broken nation, but at the same time will be hated, an *odium generis humani*. But the Jewish monotheism will, when the time comes, gain the hearts of the heathen; salvation comes from the Jews" (p. 53).

"But Yahweh is more than the God of the crude and as yet little corrupted people; He is at the same time for Elijah the God of right. In the case of the murder of Naboth, Elijah stands up in the name of Yahweh, who demands right and righteousness in Israel, and who avenges the shed blood of the innocent: 'Yesterday have I seen the blood of Naboth and his sons, and I will recompense it upon thee here in this field.'

"Even this is not new; on the contrary, it was a primitive conviction that the poured out blood cries to Heaven for vengeance, and that Yahweh Himself will be the avenger of blood, if no other voice speaks out. The legend of Cain murdering

his brother has already spoken of this. But the energy with which Elijah agitated against Naboth's murder is unheard of. For the sins of kings are judged differently from those of private persons. The frightful and bloody deeds of Solomon, who caused to be put to death his own brother and his father's meritorious general, were excused : for the Israelite king who must maintain himself against rivals is compelled to do many things which would not be allowed to the private citizen. And in the Orient oppression of the lower classes was a common thing. 'In the old Orient, and even still in the present, such things are of daily occurrence, and are taken by everybody as a matter of course.' But Elijah thinks differently ; murder is murder, even if it is by the king himself. To Ahab a shameful death is predicted, not on account of Baal, but because of Naboth, and in this the people are able to understand him ; the announcement of judgment against Ahab the murderer, found an echo in the general conscience, as is testified by the word which Jehu speaks when He executes judgment on Ahab's flesh and blood" (p. 61).

Thus are men well equipped for the task, seeking to trace the long, slow progress of the prophetic movement, which in other words is the struggle of noble men for righteousness. The Power that makes for righteousness finds voice in these men ; in and through them it struggles for

clearness and strength of expression. Laws of righteousness find expression also in what we call the world of nature, but it is in the heart of mankind and in the relations of the human family that they require and receive the most delicate adjustment. It is here that inspiration finds its full play, calling men to toil and suffer for the truth, and to prove their real humanity by unselfish service. Inspiration as a dictation of words or impartation of dogmas may have to be given up or modified, but inspiration as the divine power which calls and qualifies men to be messengers of God and servants of humanity, stands out more clearly as the result of all this criticism. At this point something may be said as to Wellhausen's "clear and honourable words": "Why, for example, did not Chemosh of Moab become the God of righteousness and the creator of heaven and earth: a satisfactory answer to this cannot be given" (Baentsch, *Monotheismus*, p. 9). One answer, or one part of the answer, surely is that in Israel there was a succession of prophetic men, of men who at different stages knew how to choose between the higher and the lower, the temporary and the eternal; and that these men carried forward through the centuries a progressive movement which is larger than any one or all of them, of which we have to say, "It is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes." This is not an answer that



attempts to stand in the way of critical investigation ; it remains open to specialists to inquire how much these men and their nation owe to a still more distant past. There is no return possible to the older view as to the nature and order of the documents. And the controversy as to how far our views concerning the earliest idea of God must be modified by recent discoveries is far from being settled ; but there is one thing that becomes ever clearer, namely, that from the Hebrew documents, scanty as they are, we can build up the picture of a religion which grows in purity and strength, and also becomes enriched by the very influences that threaten to submerge it. The line between prophets, priests, and lawgiver must not be drawn too deeply here ; there were many workers in this great field who, from many sides, contributed to a higher social life and a deeper individual faith. If there is such a thing as "mere natural development," it is certainly not here ; a severely critical investigation shows that the line of natural development is broken, that is, we cannot trace a regular scheme of progress from ancestor worship to polytheism and then on to monotheism ; but we find a people lifted out of base superstition and drawn away from primitive belief by the power of great ideas or the influence of living truths preached by God-inspired men. As a matter of fact, many of the people could not and did not rise to this lofty height ; through the

struggle that was involved the nation was broken and the people scattered, but the Church lives and the Book survives. One of the mightiest witnesses for God's care of and interest in human life is the work of these faithful men; they were often rejected by their fellow-men, but they stand forth justified in the large space of the world's history. Without them "the fulness of times," the season for still higher thoughts and larger purposes, could not have appeared. We do not belittle others in giving to them their due meed of praise; all who are capable of impartial judgment must admit that God has granted them a high and honourable place in the educational course through which the world passed.

The message of the prophets, then, in various forms, was related to the oneness of God; at first, one God for their own nation, and later one God for the wide world. They were not philosophers, but rather practical workers; this, however, they had in common with the true philosophers, that they were seeking the one purpose and the one true life that give unity and meaning to the world. Their world was smaller than ours, but they did not wish to have it split up into separate, disconnected sections; they longed for unity and harmony in their thought of the world and in the life of man, one Lord whose worship should bind the members of the nation into one family. This was their aim in opposition to local Baals and

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foreign deities. The sun, moon, and stars had been great gods; but even they, in Israel's system, must be regarded as creatures of God and servants of men.

Out of this there springs the thought of the brotherhood of men; of course, it is at first the brotherhood of Israelitish men, but a brotherhood based upon the oneness of God must grow with the growing idea of God. It is true that Judaism, as a system, never completely solved this spiritual problem; for the saving of its life it was driven by the stress of circumstances to assume more and more a position of exclusiveness; but this simply means that Judaism could not fully express in its national life and ecclesiastical constitution all the principles, hopes, and anticipations of its great prophets. The glory and tragedy of the life of Israel is the fact that the small nation is made the mother of mighty movements and the organ of great ideas which for their expression and fulfilment need the endless future and the large stage of the whole world-history. What was said of Isaiah may be true of all the prophets, but our lack of knowledge does not lessen the significance of the great movement. "Cultivated people have in general a much clearer and more connected notion of the important movements and situations in Greek and Roman history—of the Persian war, the rise of Athens, the Sicilian expedition, the Roman Republic, the Punic wars,

Cæsar and the Empire—than they have of the historical movement and situation with which Isaiah had to deal. But we cannot appreciate Isaiah unless we have before our minds this movement and situation" (Matthew Arnold in *Nineteenth Century*, April 1883, p. 595). Those of us who are able to give some little time to the study of this great subject feel that our knowledge on many points leaves much to be desired, but the general course of the movement stands out with clear impressiveness.

As a whole, and in each of its members, this movement witnesses for the supremacy of the moral element in human life; for the power that binds men to God and each other. Every true prophet has his own standpoint with regard to the politics of the present and the hopes of the future, but their love of righteousness and their boldness in setting morality above mere convention are the bonds that unite them into a sacred brotherhood. The fact that they stand out most prominent in troubled times does not mean that they love stormy weather for its own sake, but rather that, in such crises, righteousness is the one thing likely to suffer and therefore to need defence. When the old tribal customs and bonds were weakened by the growth of cities and the cultivation of commerce, they saw that society must be set upon a moral basis or suffer destruction. When the nation itself was about to be broken

to pieces, they saw in this a call for a deeper spiritual life. They were careless as to ritual, because they knew that there would always be plenty of people to cherish an undue care for it; in a sense, it would take care of itself. They were interested in politics, but not as a profession in which to show their skill or out of which they might gain wealth or glory; politics for them meant simply the life of the nation in its relation to God and to the great outside world. They were social reformers; to the earlier prophets man was regarded always as a member of society rather than as an independent individual. Social morality is the chief concern of men like Isaiah and Amos. In opposition to a showy ritual, they set up their demands for justice between man and man. To them there is no such thing as "mere morality;" morality rightly understood is religion. They are not psychologists in the modern sense, they are not much given to introspection; they have visions and hear voices, but the purpose of all their revelations is to make the man a better citizen, and to make the community a kingdom ruled in a very real sense by the living God. Theologies change, men's hopes of future glory assume new forms, but here is something permanent: the prophetic demand for personal faithfulness and social righteousness is needed in our day in the very form in which they presented it. A careful study of the prophets will

show us the real meaning of "patriotism." It will make us understand that there is nothing more fatal to the life of the Church and the nation than the divorce of religion from morality. From them we learn that goodness is the highest form of worship, and that nothing else can take its place. Many great truths they have taught and many noble ideals they have cherished, but it must ever remain one of their chief glories that they were so far above their age as to teach that God desires mercy and not sacrifice; and that the true sacrifice is the conquest of self and the service of our fellow-men. At the very heart of their message is a strenuous call to serve God by recognising the brotherhood of men.

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## NOTES.

### CHAPTER II.

(A) *The Problem of the Old Testament*, by James Orr, D.D., London, 1906.

It would require more than one volume to review in anything like a satisfactory manner Dr. Orr's recent contribution to Old Testament criticism; all that can be attempted here is a brief explanation of the fact that in the foregoing chapters it was impossible to avoid several direct references to this volume; and a short statement of the reasons for regarding Dr. Orr's position as unsatisfactory. Just at the time when the present writer was called to deliver a series of lectures for which the most suitable subject seemed to be the present outlook for Old Testament Interpretation, Dr. Orr's volume appeared, challenging the results of modern Criticism, and making serious charges against the great body of scholars who hold opinions differing from his own. This book had the prestige of having received the Bross prize of \$6,000, and so could lay claim to be regarded as a strong attack on modern scholarship in the name of Christian apologetics. "This is unquestionably a work of great erudition. It will repay careful and repeated study, and is likely to

remain for long the weightiest indictment by a Scottish theologian of the critical views at present all but universally held by Old Testament scholars" (Rev. Dr. J. A. Paterson, *The Scottish Review*, Feb. 22nd, 1906). Hence, while endeavouring to avoid discourteous attack, it was impossible to ignore a volume fresh from the press, and dealing so vigorously with the subject in hand.

A few additional remarks may now be added as to the impression created by Dr. Orr's elaborate indictment, and in proof of the statement that the result is not satisfactory. (1) Reviews may be quoted at length to show that with all its learning and industry the book comes too late in the day to have any real far-reaching influence, but very little of this must suffice. "While obtaining a very clear insight into the difficulties of the critical position, especially in the Graf-Wellhausen formulation of it, the uninitiated reader would really gain very little idea from this work of the seriousness of the problem of the Old Testament. Such a reader, especially if he be temperamentally opposed to the removal of the ancient landmarks, would probably lay down Dr. Orr's book with the easeful conviction that all the armies of the aliens had been disastrously routed. The book is indeed so 'plausible,' to use the word which Dr. Orr applies to the Wellhausen hypothesis, that we fear it will serve as 'poppy and mandragora' to many persons who will not take the time to examine exhaustively the biblical data, and lull them to sleep in a false security as to the tenableness of the ancient tradition," etc. (*Expository Times*, 1906). A reviewer who has more sympathy with "the conservative side" is driven to the same conclusion. Principal Scrimger, writing in the *Presbyterian College Journal*, Montreal, Nov. 1906,



speaking of the documentary theory, says, "The strength of this theory lies not in its being able to set at rest all the perplexing questions that may be asked, but in the fact that it has general consistency with itself, and seems to account for the literary variations that are acknowledged to exist within the Pentateuch itself. The great weakness of Dr. Orr's book is that it does not present us with any alternative theory of a Mosaic authorship which would naturally account for these variations. The main problem remains a problem still, and the conservative side still awaits some critic who will furnish us with any adequate solution which may command the support of its friends and compel that of its foes." That Dr. Orr has not given complete satisfaction to any except those who desire "the poppy and mandragora" is not a matter for surprise, because he has attempted an impossible task.

(2) It is easy enough to find difficulties of detail in any great scheme of literary and historical interpretation, but it is foolish to suppose that by finding such difficulties we can restore an earlier system which has fallen completely to pieces. Yet Dr. Orr seems to hold that such is the effect of his vigorous polemic. "This is my reply also to the point Professor Peake makes, that to disprove the critical theory (were that possible) is not to rehabilitate the traditional view—the one fixed point with the experts is that, whatever theory is true, the traditional is false." I might remind Professor Peake that the 'Mosaic authorship,' in the older unmodified sense, is not the necessary antithesis to the 'modern' view, and I have certainly never contended, as he says, that 'the discordance of experts' proves 'that the traditional theory is right.' So far as the Biblical view is defended, it is on the ground of its own evidence. Still, the 'discordance of experts,' which, as I have

tried to show, goes through the whole theory, is an important element in the case. And may it not be reasonably held that when only two views, practically, are in the field, opposed to each other in principle, the disproof of the one is, in no small degree, the rehabilitation of the other?" If we were assured that Dr. Orr had disproved the one, then we might ask what is the other? And when we come to that question the answer would not be easy, for the phrase "Mosaicity" is rightly charged with ambiguity, and the author in his reply to Professor Paterson does not attempt to give an exact definition of it. But we fail to see that Dr. Orr has disproved the view that there was a gradual evolution of law and ritual as seen in the three codes of JE, D and P, and in the historical books of the Bible. It is impossible to examine all the cases of so-called contradiction among the critics, but these seem to be very much exaggerated; e.g., the complicated analysis of Deuteronomy attempted by Steuernagel is not in direct contradiction to the view commonly held; it accepts the main lines of the dominant opinion, but goes behind this and seeks to give a more specific and detailed account of the origin of the kernel of the book. A similar remark might be made concerning the work of Gunkel and that of other scholars (see Note on Baentsch, *Monotheism*). The fundamental fallacy lying behind Dr. Orr's position seems to be the idea that by laying stress on these inconsistencies, supposed or real, we can be driven back to a position more orthodox than the "modern" one; but what that position is we have great difficulty in discovering.

(3) If the present writer stood alone in his failure to discover Dr. Orr's exact position or to appreciate the fine consistency of one whose great effort is to discover the inconsistencies of other scholars, he

might have to set it down to his own obtuseness; but having met several persons who professed admiration for the book but were unable to give a clear account of its position, having set it as a task to students of more than average ability, and having noted the opinions of even friendly reviewers, he is confirmed in his impression that it does not grapple effectually with the real problem. One of the most favourable reviews was that given in the *Expositor*, July 1906; but the writer of it, Professor D. S. Margoliouth, does not find much difference between Dr. Orr's theory on p. 360 and the radical view opposed on p. 375, and he sees that if any paragraph headed "And the Lord spoke unto Moses, saying," contains any matter not actually delivered by Moses, then Dr. Orr's own view is not free from reproach. Dr. Orr is entitled to his own view even if it is not free from reproach, but some of us must confess to a feeling of irritation in reading his apologetic, because it so often adopts the tone of the superior person who is exactly right on every point. For example, Dr. Orr writes to the *Homiletic Review*, soon after the publication of his volume, to explain that criticism is in a state of wild confusion, but he is willing to concede a general J, E, and P distinction in Genesis; in the book itself he denounces critical views as "rationalistic," and yet tells us that even the most cautious and conservative of "believing" scholars have been compelled to accept critical conclusions (p. 81). He states clearly, what is self-evident, that we must have "Higher Criticism"; he himself exercises all kinds of criticism, acknowledges a debt even to "the rationalistic sort," and yet maintains that modern criticism is in its main lines vitiated by an anti-supernatural bias. The result, then, surely must be that we have to discuss each case on its own

merits, and we are compelled to acknowledge that there are some questions in the Old Testament that can be settled by literary and historical evidence, and, further, that in such cases the same conclusions may be reached by the reverent believer as well as by the man who, on Dr. Orr's view, is an unbeliever. For example, a man might gladly confess that there is a living God behind the great movement, who could inspire a sermon a century before the audience for it was born, but yet when he examined the section called "Deutero-Isaiah" (Isa. xl.-lv.), and took its own testimony concerning itself, be convinced that this particular sermon arose in the time to which it makes its appeal. In other words, it is proved that many of the results of modern criticism are based upon a careful study of the facts of the particular cases; and it does not follow that if one accepts these he is bound to accept the view either of Kuenen or of Dr. Orr as to "the supernatural."

(4) The book begins with a statement of the problem which, in our opinion, has the fault which its author charges against the critics, namely, turns things upside down by maintaining that a proper idea of the nature, origin, and growth of Hebrew religion can be formed before the date and order of the documents have been settled. Next, in an eloquent chapter we have "The Old Testament from its Own Point of View." Here we have a noble eulogy of the Old Testament built up mainly from the traditional point of view. But many of the finest things in it, while quite appropriate for a practical sermon, are beside the mark in a book which professes to be a scientific examination of the critical problems. In a book of devotion we expect warnings against treating the Bible merely as a subject for scientific dissection, but in this case the aim is rather

to set up a Bible which speaks in its own voice and tells its own clear tale in opposition to the mangled Bible of modern critics. But even here we cannot escape from critical questions; only when the book has been studied and examined can we say in what way there is "fragmentariness" and "organic unity" in it. We have no desire to criticise what is here said about the glory and beauty of the Old Testament, but we maintain that the way in which it is said is based upon the traditional interpretation which even on the author's own view must admit of modification. Next, it is shown that if we accept the documents J, E, D, and P, purpose can still be traced running through the history; a fact that is accepted by all except those who are unbelievers. A great part of the remainder of the book is devoted to showing that this theory of documents cannot be accepted in the form which is now dominant, and yet, as we have seen, the author accepts it in some form. This constant mingling of what is accepted with what is controverted, and the qualifying of statements until they seem to pass over to the other side, is what makes the book a puzzle to the average student. Take such passages as the following:—

"In what sense do we speak of 'history' in these early parts of the Bible? So far we must agree with the critics when they remind us that the history in the Bible is *religious* history, that is, not bare narratives of outward occurrences, as an ancient chronicler or modern newspaper reporter might set them down, but history written from a religious standpoint for purposes of edification, and reflecting in its story the impression on the mind of the beholder and on the writer, as well as the objective fact. As respects the early periods, it follows from what has been said, and is evident of

itself, that what we have to do with is, for the most part, not contemporary narration, but history in the form of *carefully preserved tradition*,—not, indeed, as the critics will have it, mere floating folk-lore, but sacred tradition of real events and transactions in the lives of real men, and of God's revelations and dealings with them—tradition on which we can rely as faithfully conveying to us the contents of God's message to them and to ourselves—yet still *tradition*, having the rounded, dramatic character which narratives naturally assume as the result of repeated telling, and recorded in the form in which they finally reached the literary narrator. Such transmission may not exclude a measure of 'idealisation' and reflection of later ideas and conditions; but this, we are persuaded, to a far smaller extent than many—even believing writers—suppose. The view of the history thus indicated we now proceed to vindicate" (p. 87).

"To what conclusions have we now been led?

"For one thing, it is first to be said, *not* to the conclusion that Moses himself wrote the Pentateuch in the precise shape or extent in which we now possess it; for the work, we think, shows very evident signs of different pens and styles, of editorial redaction, of stages of compilation. As before observed, its composition has a *history*, whether we are able ever to track satisfactorily that history or not. On the other hand, next, very strongly to the view of the unity, essential *Mosaicity*, and relative antiquity of the Pentateuch. The unity which characterises the work has its basis mainly in the history, knit together as that is by the presence of a developing divine purpose; but arises also from the *plan* of the book, which must have been laid down early, by one mind, or different minds working together, while the memory of the great

patriarchal traditions was yet fresh, and the impressions of the stupendous deliverance from Egypt, and of the wonderful events connected with and following it, were yet recent and vivid. In the collation and preparation of the materials for this work—some of them, perhaps, reaching back into pre-Mosaic times—and the laying of the foundations of the existing narratives, to which Moses by his own compositions, according to constant tradition, lent the initial impulse, many hands and minds may have co-operated, and may have continued to co-operate, after the master mind was removed; but unity of purpose and will gave a corresponding unity to the product of their labours. So far from such a view being obsolete, or disproved by modern criticism, we hold that internal indications, external evidence, and the circumstances of the Mosaic age itself, unite in lending their support to its probability" (p. 369).

When, with regard to such passages, and there are many of them, learned professors say it is hard to distinguish the view given from the critical view, the ordinary reader may be excused if he finds it difficult to grasp the position clearly. In fact, is a position of unstable equilibrium, and one holding it, if he continues to work at the subject, would be more likely to go forward than backward.

(5) With regard to difficulties, it is clear that there will never be a scheme of interpretation without difficulties when we are dealing with a literature that extends over a thousand years of life different and distant from ours. Further, we must remember that criticism is still in process, and, whatever the final conclusions, it is too early to expect them yet. Such a question, to mention only one, as the relation of the books of Jeremiah and Deuteronomy to each

other still calls for a considerable amount of investigation. Many difficulties of detail will no doubt remain, but some of them will in the future receive a better solution. In the meantime, criticism has certainly given a clearer view of the history and a nobler interpretation of the literature which men of faith are glad to use for instruction and inspiration. It is scarcely wise for Protestants to talk too much about the taint of rationalism, or to be suspicious of an opinion because it did not come from an orthodox ecclesiastic. We are ever on the lookout for a still more perfect construction of this great movement, but we know full well that Dr. Orr has not supplied it.

(B) It is not intended in these notes to give anything like a complete bibliography; that would require a volume of itself; it would be of little use to the general reader, and one who is really a student of these subjects knows where to find it. A number of books will be mentioned that are accessible and suitable to all who wish to read more widely round the subject; and a few extracts will be made from articles, lectures, or books that are not within easy reach.

*Introduction to the Temple Bible*, by the Bishop of Ripon (J. M. Dent & Co.). *The Divine Library of the Old Testament*, by Dr. A. F. Kirkpatrick, D.D. (Macmillan). *The Bible, its Origin and Nature*, by Dr. Marcus Dods (Charles Scribner's Sons). *Modern Criticism and the Preaching of the Old Testament*, by Dr. G. A. Smith (Hodder & Stoughton). *The Origin and Permanent Value of the Old Testament*, by Professor Kent (Charles Scribner's Sons). *Bennett's Primer of the Bible* (Methuen & Co.). *Old Testament Criticism and the Christian Church*, by Professor J. E. McFadyen (Charles Scribner's Sons). *Monument Facts*



*and Higher Critical Fancies*, by A. H. Sayce, LL.D., D.D., Professor of Assyriology in the University of Oxford (Fleming H. Revell).

Professor Sayce's small volume is certainly by its title and method of criticism provocative of sharp reply. After penning the remarks in the text of this book, the present writer came across a review in the *British Weekly* for November 23rd, 1893, in which a similar feeling is reflected: referring to a new book by Dr. Sayce, the writer says, "It is very difficult to understand what Professor Sayce means. He angrily repudiates the idea that he believes in the inerrancy of the Bible. In many important respects, such as the date of Daniel, he is at one with the critics, and yet he is always making sallies upon them. The new book will probably help us to understand what he is driving at."

Professor Bennett says, "We may give a striking example of the way in which Professor Sayce bases large conclusions on slight and ambiguous evidence. The name Kirjath-Sepher occurs in the Old Testament; it may mean 'Town of the book,' or 'Writing,' or collectively 'of the Books,' i.e. 'of the library'; it may also mean 'Town of the Scribe'; and, as in many such cases, the form of the name may be an Israelite corruption of an ancient Canaanite name which meant something quite different. Scribes and writings were often official and commercial, not literary. Yet on this slight foundation combined with a little evidence even more doubtful, Professor Sayce bases the statement that 'Kirjath-Sepher is an evidence that libraries existed in Canaan at the epoch of the Israelitish invasion, and that the fact was known and recollected by the invaders'" (*Contemporary Review*, April 1906).

On the general question of libraries, see an article in

the *New York Independent* for June 26th, 1906. The writer says, "With the single probable exception of Babylon, there is no reason to believe that the Babylonian temples had libraries, that is, extensive literary archives," etc. See also Driver's *Genesis*, p. 143.

#### The Canon.

On the Canon the standard works of Buhl and Ryle may be consulted; the article by Budde in the *Encycl. Bibl.* is worthy of careful reading. The significance of statements such as the following should be considered: "The conclusion that there was a recognised Alexandrian Canon distinct from that of Palestine has found much favour with Roman Catholic critics, as it seemed to give authority to the Apocrypha. But it is more probable that there was no intention to erect a separate standard of Canonicity, and that the additional books were admitted partly owing to the Canon of Palestine not having yet been definitely or authoritatively fixed, partly owing to a certain breadth of practical view" (*HDB* i. 289").

"The broader-minded Jews of the dispersion, and especially Alexandria and the early Christian Church, refused to be bound by the narrow principle that divine revelation ceased with Ezra. Accordingly we find them adopting a larger canon, that included many other later writings, known in time as the apocryphal or hidden books."

"While they will always be of great value in the study of Jewish history, literature, and religion, the majority of the apocryphal books undoubtedly belong to the secondary group to which the Palestinian Jews and the Protestant reformers assigned them. Three or four, however, tested by the ultimate principles of canon-

icity, are equal, if not superior, to certain books like Chron., Esther, and Eccles." (Kent, *The Permanent Value*, etc., pp. 219, 221).

*The dead level theory of inspiration.* On the practical side compare the interesting statement by Dr. G. A. Smith when speaking of the late Professor Drummond's correspondents, "One and all tell how the literal acceptance of the Bible—the faith which finds in it nothing erroneous, nothing defective, and (outside of the sacrifices and Temple) nothing temporary—is what has driven them from religion. Henry Drummond was not a Biblical scholar; he was not an authority on the Old Testament. But the large trust which his personality and writings so magically produced, moved men and women to address to him all kinds of questions. It is astonishing how many of these had to do with the Old Testament: with its discrepancies, its rigorous laws, its pitiless tempers, its open treatment of sexual questions, the atrocities which are narrated by its histories and sanctioned by its laws. Unable upon the lines of the teaching of their youth to reconcile these with a belief in the goodness of God, the writers had abandoned or were about to abandon the latter; yet they eagerly sought an explanation which would save them from such a disaster" (*O.T. Criticism*, etc., p. 27).

On the theoretical side as we have pointed out, criticism creates new difficulties for the theologian; but what do theologians exist for except to face difficulties such as those raised in the above quotation? All that we can say at this point is that there is no such thing as escaping them by going back to the traditional view of the documents. (See a very useful volume by Dr. W. N. Clarke, *The Use of the Scriptures in Theology*. Charles Scribner's Sons.)

## CHAPTER III.

The fullest direct answer to Professor Sayce's recent attack may be found from the pen of Dr. Bennett, referred to above; it meets the issue squarely, mentions Dr. Sayce's serious departure from the traditional view, and maintains that the body of expert Assyriological opinion is on the side of the critics: "In some circles the idea is current that the various discoveries of monuments, inscriptions, papyri in Egypt and Western Asia have upset the conclusions which Biblical scholars have arrived at through the patient labours of more than a century. It is further supposed that these same discoveries have rehabilitated the crude Rabbinical and mediæval views of the Bible, which most educated men have long regarded as obsolete. That such ideas as to the significance of the monuments are entirely erroneous is generally recognised by those who are acquainted with the facts and are not dominated by supposed necessities of doctrine," etc. "One striking exposition of modern criticism is the *Polychrome Bible*, and the editor, Dr. Paul Haupt, is one of the most distinguished Assyriologists of the day. Take again some of the most important standard works on the Old Testament and the Monuments. To begin with, take *Die Keilschriften und das Alte Testament*. This was originally written by Schrader, was translated into English by Dr. Whitehouse, and was recast by Zimmern and Winckler. All these four scholars hold the modern views as set forth above, and the same is true of A. Jeremias, the author of *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients*." See also McCurdy's *History, Prophecy, and the Monuments*, vol. iii., *Authority and Archæology*, etc., p. 145.

*The critic and the spade.* This field of study is serious enough and sometimes it threatens to be dull, hence it is well that there should be diverting incidents, such as the appearance of Dr. Emil Reich on the field with sound of trumpets and brandishing of—spades. He will tell us what must be done to destroy the apparently "scientific rigour" of higher criticism. "Articles and lectures will not do. Huge and unwieldy tomes are very expensive and take too much precious time. In this predicament it is best to resort to action. By action, I mean the spade. Most of the fancies and philological cobwebs of higher critics, whether in Greek, Roman, or Oriental antiquity, have been satisfactorily disposed of by the spade. Of the spade it cannot be said that it is no 'specialist.' It cannot be said that it is not 'competent,' that it is not 'dispassionate,' that it is blustering. A spade is modest, impersonal, to the point, efficient. When it speaks it does so in no ambiguous terms. It is clear, patent, and irrefutable. Let us then apply the spade." Before this we were content to call a spade a spade, but after this wonderful revelation we see that we were very much in the dark. But even the spade cannot work without money, and the sum of £3000 to £5000 called for by Dr. Reich is a modest sum when we remember that it is to be applied for the purpose of digging up at Ed-daharije, which may be the site of Kirjath-Sepher, a copy of Genesis or Exodus in the cuneiform script, and that this copy "would by one stroke and for ever dispose of the preposterous, retrograde, and mediæval method of higher criticism." Surely this is excellent foolery, but more suitable for *Punch* than for the *Contemporary Review* of January 1906.

*Archæology and the Patriarchal Histories.* Dr. Pinches (p. 141) tells us that, with one or two ex-

ceptions, it is probable that we have nothing from Babylonian sources bearing on the patriarchs who preceded Abraham at all, and the following strange statement is the kind of light that is thrown on the age of Abraham. "If there were elephants in 'the land of Haran' 1100 years before Christ, it is very probable that they were to be found in the neighbourhood a thousand years earlier; but notwithstanding any disadvantage which may have been felt from the presence of these enormous beasts, it was in all probability a sufficiently safe district for one possessing flocks and herds. There is no reason to suppose that the presence of elephants around Haran in any way influenced the patriarch to leave the place, for these animals were to be found (according to an inscription supposed to have been written for the same Assyrian king, Tiglath Pileser I.) in Lebanon, and therefore in the country where Abraham settled after quitting Haran" (p. 201).

"*Ur of the Chaldees.*" The following statement from the point of view of a critical analysis of the documents, by Dr. B. W. Bacon, *Genesis of Genesis*, p. 350, may be compared with Dr. Driver's note on the same point. "From the critical standpoint it is impossible to accept *Ur of the Chaldees* (= *Ur Muqqayar* in southern Babylonia) as the 'fatherland' of Abram. Not to speak of the fact that, as ancestor of Shem, Japheth, and Canaan, Noah, in J<sup>1</sup>, would be out of place in Babylonia, Gen. xxiv. 4, 7, 10 makes it a positive certainty that in J<sup>1</sup> Abram's 'fatherland' was *Aram Naharaim* and the city of *Nahor*. It is difficult to account for the strange introduction here of the name of an extremely ancient town in south Babylonia except as the necessity of the Flood-story compelled its incorporator to adapt the story to its scene. '*Ur of the Chaldees*' may well

be regarded as the last link by which the great Flood interpolation, based upon the Assyro-Chaldean national epos, was attached to the primitive Hebrew saga. Having taken Noah from Aram Naharaim, the home of the vine, to the scene of the Babylonian Flood-story, he must now bring back Noah's descendants from 'Ur of the Chaldees' in order to attach his interpolation to the primitive narrative of how Abram went forth from Aram Naharaim and came into the land of Canaan."

*The age of writing.* It is now well known that writing was extensively practised long before the Hebrews came into Palestine; but that does not prove that literary culture was common in Israel in the earliest period. "The act of writing belongs to the elements of culture which were foreign to the nomadising Israelites, and which they had first to learn from the Canaanites. Towards the end of our period it was generally used, and the prophets of the next decades put their speeches into written form. But already under Solomon all the conditions of the origin of a literature were present. Yet we cannot with certainty maintain that the writing down of any of the pieces of literature received by us actually took place at that period" (Benzinger, *Geschichte*, Leipzig, 1904). Cf. Driver's *Genesis*, p. 143.

On the relation of the spiritual value of the patriarchal stories to their strict historical truth, see a fine passage in McFadyen's *O.T. Criticism and the Christian Church*, p. 334.

*Authority and Archaeology, Sacred and Profane; Essays on the Relation of Monuments to Biblical and Classical Literature*, by several writers. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York; John Murray, Albemarle Street, London, 1899. Professor Dr. Fr. Hommel, *Die altoriental-*

*ischen Denkmäler und das alte Testament*, Eine Erwiderung auf Professor Dr. Delitzsch's *Babel und Bibel*, Berlin, 1903. *The Old Testament in the Light of the Historical Records and Legends of Assyria and Babylonia*, by Theophilus G. Pinches, LL.D., M.R.A.S. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London; E. and J. B. Young & Co., New York, 1902. *The Ancient Hebrew Tradition*, etc., by Dr. Fritz Hommel, Professor of Semitic Languages in the University of Munich. Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, London, 1897.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

*Popular Archaeology*. "When, in 1872, George Smith succeeded in deciphering fragments of a cuneiform flood-story, the jubilation on that side of the channel and ocean knew no bounds. The papers filled their pages and the clergymen their sermons with information concerning the event, and from this not a few dreamed that not only would the Union Jack soon float over the pinnacles of the newly found Noah's ark, but (even much more than that) soon every doubt of the doubter and every scorn of the scorner would undeniably and infallibly be put to silence" (Kittel, *Die Babylonische Ausgrabungen*, etc.: A Lecture, Leipzig, 1903).

"Also in Germany investigators have not tried to keep clear of sensation, and they have always found thankful hearers among practical theologians who stood at a distance from scientific activity. There have also been misunderstandings in cases in which the wish was father to the thought. I remember reading recently in the papers that the wall had now been



laid bare on which Belshazzar saw written, Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin," etc. A. Jeremias, *Im Kampfe um Babel und Bibel*. (Lecture.) Leipzig, 1903.

*Explorations in Bible Lands during the Nineteenth Century*, by Professor Hilprecht. Philadelphia, A. J. Holman & Co.

Brief and reliable outlines with regard to the affairs of Babylonia and Assyria may be found in such volumes as Dr. Goodspeed's *History* (Charles Scribner's Sons), *Babylonian Religion and Mythology*, by L. W. King, M.A. (Kegan Paul & Co.).

On the "miracle of life," cf. Professor G. Buchanan Gray's *Divine Discipline of Israel*, p. 12.

*Jerahmeel Theory*. There is no desire to speak disrespectfully of Dr. Cheyne, but in a volume which intends simply to report the chief results of criticism, as accepted by the great body of scholars, there is no space for the discussion of his new theory, and its application to the text. In this connection, however, his views on Winckler's *Religionsgeschichtlicher und geschichtlicher Orient* are interesting: "Speaking of 'presuppositions' (see Winckler's title), there is one of Winckler's fundamental principles which seems rather doubtful. It is apparently an inference from the dictum (p. 5) that 'the Bible is not the product of a people which fell down from another planet; it must, therefore, be understood from the spirit and the culture which brought it forth.' From this Winckler infers that to be a Bible-specialist you must first be an Assyriologist. But is this really the case? If it is, an adequately equipped Bible-specialist does not exist. It is almost useless to attempt to illuminate an uncorrected text. Winckler knows this, but his deficiencies are so great, that if we judged him as severely as he seems to judge others he would have

to be excluded from the ranks of Bible-specialists. But why, I ask, should this needless severity be practised? Why should we 'bite and devour one another'? Why should we not learn each from the other? Certainly much may be learned from the sixty-four pages of this little brochure, even though here as elsewhere the author shows no evidence of an interest in religious ideas as such. It is and must be difficult for ordinary Bible-students to put themselves at the new point of view so justly associated with the name of Winckler. I recommend it, therefore, though with necessary reserve. I cannot, *e.g.*, endorse this statement (p. 10 f.) that 'Abraham, Joseph, Moses are the founders of the "Religion," who at the same time indicate the relation of the Religion to the three cultures of the three great "lands" into which the Old-Oriental world may be divided.' Much as I desire that the study of the Old Testament should absorb more than it has done from Winckler and his school, I am convinced that critically and historically trained Hebraists have still much treasure to bring to light from their own texts, and I think, therefore, that Winckler's very interesting booklet on Abraham and Joseph will require not a little revision" (*The Review of Theology and Philosophy*, Jan. 1907). On the Jerahmeel Theory see an article by Professor N. Schmidt in the *Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1908.

*The Tel el-Amarna Letters.* For the letters themselves Winckler's translation in German is recommended. English readers can procure a translation of this published by Luzac, London, 1896. A clear statement of their contents with illustrative quotations is given by C. Niebuhr, *Die Amarna-Zeit* (Leipzig); English translation published by David Nutt, London, 1901. Boehmer's Lecture, referred to in the text,

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*Aus den Tell-Amarna-Briefen*, pp. 36, Gutersloh, is a short statement written in a calm, clear, impartial spirit. *Syria and Egypt from the Tell el-Amarna Letters*, by Dr. W. M. Flinders Petrie, gives the substance of the letters with brief notes on the significance of their contents (pp. 189, Methuen & Co.). The "Khabiri," "confederates," are not the Hebrews, according to this authority. Niebuhr says, "By the Habiri we must here understand no other than the Hebrews, who were therefore already to be found in the 'Promised Land,' but had not yet firmly established themselves there." "This name is explained as 'confederates,' or Hebrews, or connected with Hebron. Linguistically all three are possible and all three equally uncertain" (Boehmer, p. 32). "The Khabiri turn out to have been bands of Hittite 'condottieri' who sold their military services to the highest bidder" (Sayce, *Contemp. Review*, August, 1905).

Another interesting discovery which could not be discussed in the lectures is The Code of Hammurabi. See, again, Winckler's translation, *Die Gesetze Hammurabis* (Leipzig, 1903); *The Oldest Code of Laws*, C. H. W. Johns, M.A. (T. & T. Clark); *Moses and Hammurabi*, Dr. J. Jeremias (Leipzig, 1903).

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CHAPTERS V. AND VI.

It is not possible in a brief note to summarise the literature, most of it of an ephemeral character, on the Babel and Bible question. Those who have time to go into the subject with any thoroughness can now find, in English translations, the chief documents in the case, and can form their own opinions. The present

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writer has gone over Winckler's tracts, *Religionsgeschichtlicher und Geschichtlicher Orient*, and *Abraham als Babylonier*, since the writing of the chapters, and, while acknowledging that there is much in them that is stimulating and suggestive, and that modifications of our views on many points may come from that quarter, he cannot bring himself to believe that anything so revolutionary as the view represented by Winckler's *Geschichte* is, in the end, likely to prevail (cf. Note below on Baentsch's *Monotheismus*). One of the best brief statements, from the point of view of Old Testament Criticism, is that given by Professor F. Giesebrecht in a lecture, *Friede für Babel und Bibel* (Königsberg, 1903).

This scholar has also given a brief review of the points involved in this controversy in a small book, *Die Grundzüge der israelitischen Religionsgeschichte* (Leipzig, 1904), in which he maintains Israel's independence in the matter of religion, and discusses the precise nature of the "borrowing." See the section on "Selbständigkeit und Abhängigkeit der alttestamentlichen Religion," p. 11. By the side of Giesebrecht's contribution the following may be mentioned, as fairly representative of the numerous lectures bearing on this controversy: *Im Kampfe um Babel und Bibel*, by Dr. A. Jeremias (Leipzig, 1903); *Die altorientalischen Denkmäler und das alte Testament* (Berlin, 1903). In English the conservative side is represented in a recent volume, *Light on the Old Testament from Babel*, by Dr. A. T. Clay (Philadelphia, 1907). A very able book from the critical standpoint is that of Alex. R. Gordon, D.Litt., *The Early Traditions of Genesis* (T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh). This is a monograph on Gen. i.-xi., dealing with the linguistic, archæological, and critical questions

involved, showing along with competent learning, a fine combination of courage and reverence.

In considering this side of the subject, significant statements such as the following should receive special consideration. "The writer of this article sketched this outline from a study of numerous O.T. passages about twelve years ago, and found in Jensen's *Cosmologie der Bab.*, published in 1890, a diagram almost identical in character, descriptive of the universe according to Bab. conceptions and based purely upon the data of the cuneiform inscriptions" (Dr. O. C. Whitehouse, art. "Cosmogony" in *HDB* i. 503-7).

The following comparison of the two accounts of creation from a scholar who is at the same time an enthusiastic student of the Babylonian records and a firm believer in the reality of revelation, is worthy of careful consideration. He sees clearly the similarities of the two narratives, and finds the differences thus: (1) In the security with which God is spoken of; all heathen creation narratives speak at the same time of the origin of the gods; the cosmogonies are also theogonies. The God who in Gen. i. has made heaven and earth has nothing in common with His creation; He stands exalted over against His works.

(2) The powers working in creation and the visible parts of creation appear in the other Oriental cosmogonies as gods and monsters. There is no trace of these mythological figures to be found in Gen. i. Only where the popular poetry describes the victory of the living God over earthly and super-earthly powers (exactly as the old German mythological forms in Christian poetry) do they occur in figurative speech (Rahab, Leviathan).

(3) The tendency of the Biblical narrative is purely religious. It is meant to stimulate worship and thank-

fulness towards the Almighty Creator and Preserver of the world. Compare the lyrical echo of Gen. i. in Ps. civ. The heathen cosmogonies do not serve a religious purpose. The Epos *Enuma elis* has, for example, a religious purpose; it will furnish the proof that Babylon has a claim on the dominion of the world. The city god Marduk has created the world (A. Jeremias, *Im Kampfe*, etc., p. 17). Two carefully written articles by Dr. G. A. Barton, *Biblical World*, 1908 (Chicago), *Foreign Influences in the Bible*, etc.

The edition of Delitzsch's *Three Lectures on Babel and Bibel*, published by the Open Court Co. (Chicago), contains not only additional notes by the lecturer, but also criticisms by several scholars.

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#### CHAPTER VII.

Budde, *Religion of Israel to the Exile*. G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

Marti, *The Religion of the Old Testament*. ("Crown Theol. Lib.") G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

Ottley, *The Religion of Israel*. The University Press, Cambridge.

W. R. Smith, *The Religion of the Semites*. A. & C. Black.

Robertson, *Early Religion of Israel*. Blackwood & Sons, 1892.

Addis, *Hebrew Religion*. ("Crown Theol. Lib.") G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York).

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#### CHAPTER VIII.

Day, *The Social Life of the Hebrews*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

## Notes to Chapter IX.

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Curtiss, *Primitive Semitic Religion To-Day*. Fleming H. Revell & Co.

Todd, *Politics and Religion in Ancient Israel*. Macmillan.

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### CHAPTER IX.

Montefiore, *Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of the Ancient Hebrews*. (The Hibbert Lectures, 1892.) Williams & Norgate, London.

Kent, *A History of the Hebrew People*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Lyman Abbot, *The Life and Literature of the Ancient Hebrews*. Houghton Mifflin & Co., Boston and New York.

W Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*. A. & C. Black.

In connection with this chapter, a brief note on Baentsch's *Monotheismus* will be quite in order, especially as the book has been appealed to in proof of the breakdown of "Wellhausenism." As a matter of fact, it does not profess to be a refutation of the critical conclusions, but simply calls for a revision of the theological position so as to allow a fuller appropriation of the light from Babylon. The good work done by the Wellhausen school is gladly acknowledged (p. 108). The author does not deny the fact of development, but maintains that the idea of God in early Israel was not so simple as many critics seem to suppose. Fortunately Professor Baentsch has himself provided us with a brief summary of what he regards as the course of development in the religion of Israel. Here it is:

1. Already the Jahve of the pre-Mosaic time was no ordinary mountain God; as God of the moving region of the air and as astral God he had a more comprehensive significance, to which a higher representation of God could easily be linked.

2. Moses was the founder of a religious or practical monotheism; for him Jahve had substantially the place of the one true God; but he set this Jahve in a special relation to Israel, and enclosed him, so to speak, in the limits of a national religion. Thus the other gods were still in a certain measure recognised as gods of the peoples, only Israel declined all relation to them.

3. The Jahve religion on Canaanite soil, and indeed in pre-prophetic times, has, through the taking up of Babylonian myths and speculations, developed a theoretical or conceptional monotheism. This monotheism as a doctrine has run a long time alongside the nationally coloured monotheism without coming into harmony with it, and thus gaining influence for the religion of the people.

The great prophets of the eighth century were the first to bring together Jahve, the world God, and the national Jahve, and gradually to fuse them into an organic unity. The most perfect fusion is shown in the prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah (p. 104).

We have not space to criticise this in detail, we simply point out that it is a doctrine of development, that its author accepts the critical views as to the literature, and that he makes the idea of the God of the world to be brought in from outside instead of growing up within Israel. See article "Moses and Monotheism," by Dr. H. P. Smith, *American Journal of Theology*, July 1908.

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CHAPTER X.

Bacon, *The Genesis of Genesis*.

" *The Triple Tradition of the Exodus*. The Student Publishing Co., Hartford.

Addis, *The Documents of the Hexateuch*. David Nutt, London, 1892.

Carpenter and Battersby, *The Hexateuch*. ("Oxford Hex.") Longmans, Green & Co., London.

Briggs, *The Higher Criticism of the Hexateuch*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Kent, *Narratives of the Beginnings of Hebrew History*. ("The Student's Old Testament.") Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

McFadyen, *The Messages of the Prophetic and Priestly Historians*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

Lenormant, *Beginnings of History*. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1893.

It is interesting to note that this book, which gives the analysis of Genesis accepted by the critics, was written by a specialist in ancient history and archæology.

One of the most interesting books dealing with this subject is Westphal's *Les Sources du Pentateuque*, vol. i. (Paris, 1888). It gives a sketch of the movement which culminated in the formation of "The Documentary Theory," and presents the course of events in such a way as to show its dramatic character and the inevitable nature of the result. The student of this subject would do well to approach it first on the side of its history; he will thus be prepared both to realise its essential truth and to understand the modifications that are now in process. Fortunately

there are now many of these historical sketches available (see Wellhausen on the Pentateuch in *Encyc. Brit.*); but the present writer must in this particular confess his obligation to Westphal, who, in a charming fashion, tells "how out of the bosom of tradition, to which the mass of the faithful were clinging, a doubt as to the authenticity of the Pentateuch could arise; how this doubt, timid and uncertain, found in the intellectual centres illumined by the Reformation the means of transforming itself into a scientific idea; how the discoveries of Astruc and the impulse of independent criticism made of this idea a burning question, which during more than a century was the scorn of science and kindled the passions of thinking men; finally, how criticism, pacified, finished by establishing agreement among exegetes as to an idea of the Mosaic books far removed from the data supplied by tradition."

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## CHAPTER XI.

The books referred to under Chapter II.

An important contribution from the side of Philosophy is given by John Watson, M.A., LL.D., in a recent volume, entitled *The Philosophical Basis of Religion*. Maclehose, Glasgow, 1907.

*Survivals in Christianity*, by C. J. Wood. Macmillan, 1893.

*A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life*, by R. H. Charles, D.D. A. & C. Black.

*The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, by A. S. Peake, M.A. Kelly, London.

*The Use of the Scriptures in Theology*, by W. N. Clarke, D.D. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

CHAPTER XII.

Ryle, *On Holy Scripture and Criticism*. London, Macmillan & Co.

Ottley, *Aspects of the Old Testament*. (Bampton Lectures, 1897.) Longmans, Green & Co., London and New York.

A. Stopford Brooke, *The Old Testament and Modern Life*. Dodd, Mead & Co., New York.

Cheyne, *Aids to the Devout Study of Criticism*. T. Fisher Unwin.

As a specimen of good analytic work, reference may be made to a recent book on Jeremiah, by J. R. Gillie, a minister of the Presbyterian Church of England. Hodder & Stoughton.

CHAPTER XIII.

Gunkel, *The Legends of Genesis*. (Trans. Carruth.) The Open Court Co., Chicago.

Peters, *Early Hebrew Story*. ("Crown Theol. Library.") Williams & Norgate, London; G. P. Putnam's Sons, New York.

Duff, *Abraham*. J. M. Dent & Co., London.

Ryle, *The Early Narratives of Genesis*. Macmillan.

It scarcely seems necessary at this stage of our progress to construct a serious argument against the allegorical method. That method had its uses, and even radical critics are prepared to acknowledge that it was not a wilful perversity or an unmixed evil. But if criticism has any function at all, it is to enable us to

dispense with allegorical interpretations by patiently investigating the real nature of each story or poem. To speak of the first three chapters of Genesis as allegory (*The Churchman's Introduction*) is misleading. Popular books, which in an easy fashion undertake to demolish the critics, are apt to turn to the ancient method as a relief from modern difficulties. The average man who does not know Hebrew may with safety be told that "whenever the word 'man' occurs in the Old Testament it is the Hebrew 'Adam,'" and that this word "literally signifies 'earth' and refers to the earthly man"; and he will be very much enlightened by the statement that "of course the generic man at the beginning was the Historic Adam who faced the problems of moral discipline." But we have to confess that in no other realm of science do we meet with such attempts to settle great questions. H. A. Johnston, *Bible Criticism and the Average Man*, p. 93. Revell.

Let the student read carefully a small volume, *The Interpretation of the Bible*, by Dr. Gilbert. Macmillan.

Dr. N. Schmidt in his volume, *The Prophet of Nazareth*, remarks on the allegorical method: "It saved the Old Testament in its conflict with Greek thought," but its disadvantage is that it "draws attention away from grammatical sense, literary form, and historic setting, to a hidden meaning organically connected with the body of accepted doctrine. It finds the same unchanged ideas everywhere in the Scriptures. Its legacy is a certain inability to distinguish between things that differ, an often unconscious tendency to overlook inconsistencies and contradictions, a proneness to view ideas scattered through a literature extending over a thousand years

as integral parts of one system of thought, a lack of historic sense."

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CHAPTER XIV.

A. B. Davidson, *Old Testament Prophecy*. T. & T. Clark, Edinburgh.

W. G. Jordan, *Prophetic Ideas and Ideals*. Fleming H. Revell, New York and Toronto.

W. R. Smith, *The Prophets of Israel*. D. Appleton & Co., New York.

L. W. Batten, *The Hebrew Prophet*. Methuen & Co., London.

Cornill, *The Prophets of Israel*. The Open Court Co., Chicago.

Sanders and Kent, *The Messages of the Prophets*. 2 vols. Charles Scribner's Sons, New York.

With regard to this chapter, the statement should be carefully noted that no attempt is made to give even an incomplete sketch of the prophetic teaching such as may be found in the books mentioned above; the aim is merely to point to the great ethical contribution of the prophets, and to maintain that here there is a permanent element which, while it is taken up and transcended in Christianity, continues in its ancient form to be of the highest service to mankind.



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In these chapters, the connection is sometimes imperfect, esp. between 30<sup>1-10</sup> and 30<sup>11-20</sup> (see on 30<sup>11</sup>); several words and phrases occur, not otherwise found in Dt. (Dillm. notes חשכיל 29<sup>8</sup> (9), אלה oath, imprecation, 29<sup>11</sup>, 12, 13, 20, 30 (12, 14, 15, 20, 21) 30<sup>7</sup>, idol-blocks and detestations 29<sup>16</sup> (17), שריו 29<sup>17</sup> (18), שריוו, stubbornness 29<sup>18</sup> (19), עשן אף and סלה 29<sup>19</sup> (20), אלו unto evil 29<sup>20</sup> (21), מחלות sicknesses 29<sup>21</sup> (22), forsake the covenant 29<sup>24</sup> (25), נחש pluck up 29<sup>27</sup> (28), חרה drive away 30<sup>1-4</sup>; and the phrases 29<sup>8</sup> (9), 17 (18), 18 (19)); and the points of contact with Jeremiah are more numerous than usual. A question thus arises, whether the text is throughout in its original order, and whether it is entirely by the same hand as the body of Dt.: see the Introduction, § 4.

XXIX. 1-8 (2-9). Moses reminds the Israelites of all that Jehovah has wrought for them, from the time of their deliverance from Egypt, founding upon it a renewed exhortation to obey the words of the covenant.—The paragraph is a recapitulation of the substance of earlier parts of Dt., stated largely in the same phraseology.—1 (2). *And Moses called unto all Israel* (1<sup>1</sup>), *and said unto them*] exactly as 5<sup>1</sup>.—*Ye* (emph.) *have*

# **SPECIMEN PAGE**

## **238 THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO S. LUKE [VIII 54, 55.]**

This laying hold of her hand and the raised voice (*ἐφώνησεν*) are consonant with waking one out of sleep, and the two may be regarded as the means of the miracle. Comp. and contrast throughout Acts ix. 36-42.

Ἡ παῖς, *ἔγειρε*. "Arise, get up," not "awake." Mt. omits the command; Mk. gives the exact words, *Talitha cumi*. For the nom. with the art. as voc. see on x. 21, xviii. 11, 13. For *ἐφώνησεν* comp. ver. 8, xvi. 24.

55. *ἐπέστρεψεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς*. There can be no doubt that the Evangelist uses the phrase of the spirit returning to a dead body, which is the accurate use of the phrase. Only the beloved physician makes this statement. In LXX it is twice used of a living man's strength reviving; of the fainting Samson (Judg. xv. 19), and of the starving Egyptian (1 Sam. xxx. 12). Note that Lk. has his favourite *παραχρῆμα*, where Mk. has his favourite *αὐθὺς*; and comp. ver. 44, v. 25, xviii. 43, xxii. 60.

*διέταξεν αὐτῇ δοθῆναι φαγεῖν*. This care of Jesus in commanding food after the child's long exhaustion would be of special interest to Lk. In their joy and excitement the parents might have forgotten it. The charge is somewhat parallel to *ἔδωκεν αὐτὸν τῇ μητρὶ αὐτοῦ* (vii. 15) of the widow's son at Nain. In each case He intimates that nature is to resume its usual course: the old ties and the old responsibilities are to begin again.

56. *παρήγγειλεν αὐτοῖς μηδεὶ εἰπεῖν τὸ γεγονός*. The command has been rejected as an unintelligible addition to the narrative. No such command was given at Nain or at Bethany. The object of it cannot have been to keep the miracle a secret. Many were outside expecting the funeral, and they would have to be told why no funeral was to take place. It can hardly have been Christ's intention in this way to prevent the multitude from making a bad use of the miracle. This command to the parents would not have attained such an object. It was given more probably for the parents' sake, to keep them from letting the effect of this great blessing evaporate in vainglorious gossip. To thank God for it at home would be far more profitable than talking about it abroad.

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